First Metropolitan Community Church

FIRST CHURCH

OF ATLANTA

"Sharing God's Love
Serving Christ By Serving Others"

1379 Tullie Road • Atlanta, Georgia • 30329
404-325-4143 • Fax: 404-325-8265
Firstmcc@mindspring.com

Homosexuality & Christianity

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An issue that is challenging some of the foundations of the Church, and perhaps our society, is the relationship of homosexual persons to the Church. Much of Western culture's homophobia can find its roots in our Judeo-Christian heritage. It is becoming increasingly clear that much of what has long been held as truth is less scriptural and theologically founded than we have believed.

The Bible

In our Judeo-Christian society, the documents known as the Bible serve as the primary guide on most issues. It is interesting that many Christians take literally the references to homosexual acts while interpreting other texts with great flexibility. One person reported listening to a nationally known woman speak in her campaign against homosexuality. She spent much time quoting impressively from Leviticus. The listener accepted much of what the speaker had said until realizing that by Levitical standards, the crusader had herself broken many biblical laws: women speaking in church,[1] women teaching men,[2] wearing a dress made of cotton and polyester,[3] and probably others of which he was unaware.

What does the Bible really say about homosexuality? Actually, very little. Jesus said nothing at all, which is most significant. Considering the relatively small amount of attention the Bible gives to the subject, we must ask ourselves why this is such a volatile issue while other subjects (e.g. judgment, pride, hypocrisy), about which the scriptures say a great deal, receive much less passionate attention. Before looking at specific passages, let us note that everyone understands the scriptures in and through the light of what they have been taught. The Bibles was not written in a cultural void, and many of its instructions and laws we simply classify as less relevant today (e.g. prohibition of eating pork).

Nowhere in the Bible is the idea of persons being homosexual addressed. The statements are, without exception, directed at certain homosexual acts. Early writers had no understanding of homosexuality as a psychosexual orientation. That truth is a relatively recent discovery. The biblical authors were referring to homosexual acts performed by persons they assumed were heterosexuals.

The Sodom Story

A chief text for condemnation of homosexuality has been the Sodom story.[4] This story has often been interpreted as showing God's abhorrence of homosexuality. In the story,

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There are several problems with the traditional interpretation of this passage. Whether or not the intent of the men of Sodom was sexual, the inhospitality and injustice coming from the mob and generally characterizing the community were "the sin of Sodom."[5] Jesus himself refers to the inhospitality of Sodom.[6] If, indeed, the men were homosexuals, then why would Lot offer them his daughters? What is threatened here is rape. The significant point then is that God considers all rape horrible. The story deserves another reading by all of us.

It should be noted that all of the men of Sodom could not have been homosexual or there would have been no need to destroy them since they would have all died off with no heirs. Quite likely they were a mixed group of evil men attempting to be abusive to people who were different. Ironically, lesbian and gay people are often the victim of that sin.

Although the traditional interpretation of the Sodom story fails as an argument against homosexuality, there are other Old Testament passages, which make reference to homosexual acts. Again, it should be noted that these passages do not deal with same-sex orientation, nor is there any reference to genital love between lesbian or gay persons.

Homosexual Acts

Of thousands of Old Testament passages, only two make explicit reference to homosexual acts: Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13. Both of these passages are a part of the Levitical holiness code, which is not kept by any Christian group. If it were enforced, almost every Christian would be excommunicated or executed. It has been logically argued that science and progress have made many of the Levitical laws irrelevant for us. For example, Tim LaHaye states that although Levitical laws prohibit intercourse during menstruation, medical authorities do not view it as harmful; and, therefore, it should not be viewed as sinful. He further explains, "those laws were given 3,500 years ago before showers and baths were convenient, before tampons, disinfectants, and other improved means of sanitation had been invented."[7] With that, LaHaye makes this law irrelevant and rightly so. Ironically, though, in his book, *The Unhappy Gay*, the Levitical law is one of the chief cornerstones. Much of the holiness code is now irrelevant for us as moral law. Thus, having children which was of exceptional importance to the early Hebrews is now made less relevant by overpopulation, just as the prohibition against eating port and shellfish has been made irrelevant by refrigeration.

The Bible never addresses the issue of homosexual love, but has several examples of same-sex love. David's love for Jonathan was said to exceed his love for women.[8] Ruth's relationship with Naomi is certainly an example of a deep, bonding love. The Bible does value love between persons of the same sex.

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Episcopal priest, Dr. Tom Homer, has written that the Gospels imply in two places that Jesus' attitude toward lesbians and gays would not have been hostile.[9] The first is found in the story of Jesus healing the Centurion's servant.[10] The word used for the servant is *pais* which in the Greek culture referred to a younger lover of an older more powerful or educated man. Clearly the story demonstrates an unusually intense love, and Jesus' response was wholly positive.

The other hint of Jesus' attitude is seen in his comments about eunuchs.[11] Jesus opposed divorce in opposition to the abuses experienced by women. It is in the context of marriage which Jesus said that "some eunuchs were born so; others had been made eunuchs and still others choose to be eunuchs for the Kingdom's sake."

Jesus' remarks about celibacy and castration are clear, but a male child being born without testicles is a rare birth defect. It is only in our day that the Kinsey Institute has demonstrated that sexual orientation is likely determined prior to birth. It could well be that those to whom Jesus refers as being "born eunuchs" are the people we call lesbian or gay.

Jesus' attitude toward eunuchs differed greatly from the fundamentalist Pharisees of his day. To them, eunuchs were excluded from the covenant and barred from worship and participating in the community of faith. Jesus' graceful approach to eunuchs is beautifully pictured in the promises of the prophecy of Isaiah 56:4-8, "To the eunuchs … I will give them an everlasting name that will not be taken away."

In Jesus' day there were three types of persons called eunuchs: celibates, those who were slaves and were castrated so that children would not be born to them, and those who were "born eunuchs" or homosexuals. Royal and wealthy households would use castrated slaves to worked with and guard the concubines and women slaves. However, when assigning slaves to female members of the royal family they would choose homosexual slaves. With female family members, the concern was not just unwanted pregnancies, but also rape.

It is against this background that we must read the story found in Acts 8: 26-40. In this passage the Holy Spirit sends Philip the Deacon to witness to and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. One of the earliest converts to Christianity was a person excluded for sexual reasons from the Old Testament community.

Paul's References

Paul's statement in Romans 1:18-32 has been taken as the strongest New Testament rejection of homosexuality. He is concerned about the influence of the pagan culture on the Roman Christians. After giving a detailed description of a world that "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator, " he continues, "Therefore, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lusts for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty of their perversion."

What Paul was referring to was homosexual temple prostitution which was performed by various cults (though far more cults used heterosexual prostitution). Again, Paul is not referring to same-sex love, and he clearly has no concept of persons for whom this lifestyle is "natural."

Paul's other reference to homosexual acts[12] is similar to that of 1 Timothy 1:8-11. Both passages contain lists of persons to be excluded from the Realm of God. The interpretation of these passages depends on two Greek words that have always presented a problem for translators. In the King James Version, they are translated "effeminate" and "abusers of themselves with mankind." In the Revised Standard Version, they were combined and rendered homosexuals; however, these are not the Greek words for homosexual, so that translations reflect the scholars' bias. The New International Version illustrates the difference in these two words by translating them "male prostitute" and "homosexual offenders". The Jerusalem Bible uses the terms "catamites and "sodomites". Catamites were youth kept especially for sexual purpose; they were usually paid large sums of money. Neither passage refers to persons of same-sex orientation, but to people who used their sexuality for personal gain.

The Love of Christ

Jesus did a great deal to change many social customs and ideas. He elevated the position of women, and they were ultimately his best and most faithful disciples. He did this by example and by commandments that were absolutely inclusive of the rights of all people. Yet, in the name of the Christ whose love encompassed all, the Church has been the most homophobic of all institutions. This should not be surprising when we realize that the Church is still the largest institution that is primarily racially segregated.

The final and central message of he New Testament is that God loves ALL persons so much that God's Son was sent as a means of redemption from a disease by which we are all afflicted. The cure for this disease cannot be found in any set of actions. Neither homosexuality nor heterosexuality is redemptive. God's love through Christ was given to all people.

Theological Refection

For the Christian, sin must be understood as a disease which results FROM a broken relationship with God and which results IN a broken relationship with one another and with ourselves. Hence, Jesus' supreme command is to love God and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Christianity is not a religion with new rules and laws, but is rather a new relationship with God. Those things which the legalists are fond of labeling "sins" are actually just symptoms of the much deeper disease of alienation and estrangement. Much of the energy of the Church has been spent dealing with symptoms while leaving the disease intact. Jesus did not seem overly concerned about the legal transgressions of those to whom he ministered. Rather, he was much more concerned with healing the physical, spiritual, emotional, or relational brokenness of people. Perhaps if the Church would again give itself to the healing/reconciling ministry of Jesus, then some of the symptoms about which we are so concerned would begin to disappear.

That brings us to the question: Is homosexuality a symptom of brokenness? In some few cases perhaps so. Yet, obviously pointing fingers of blame and accusation is not Christ's way. Rather, Jesus accepted people as they were and allowed love and acceptance to work its miracle. However, most lesbians and gays have been lesbian or gay for as long as they can remember. For them, it is a much a natural characteristic as their eye color or their handedness. Kinsey Institute research[13] has suggested that homosexuality may well be genetic or a least linked to some prenatal factors.[14] Certainly most competent psychologist would concur that sexual orientation is set prior to the age of five in most persons. It is, therefore, not a matter of choice, so it cannot be a moral or ethical issue.

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If they are excluded from the life of the Christian community, who then will tell them of God's inclusive love and of Jesus' reconciling death? Are they left to assume that God is so narrow-minded as to exclude them for something over which they have no control and for a choice they did not make? When will the Church finally be brave enough to say

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References:

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15. *Christianity Today,* February, 1981

That In All Things Christ Might Have The **First** Place

-- Colossians 1:18

First

Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

Sunday, April 15, 2001—Easter Service
Rev. T. Paul Graetz, Senior Pastor

We Gather to Worship

Prelude for Gathering: Scott Dunn, Organist

Ringing of Chimes Calling Us To Worship:

✝ Processional Hymn: "Up From the Grave He Arose/Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" Medley

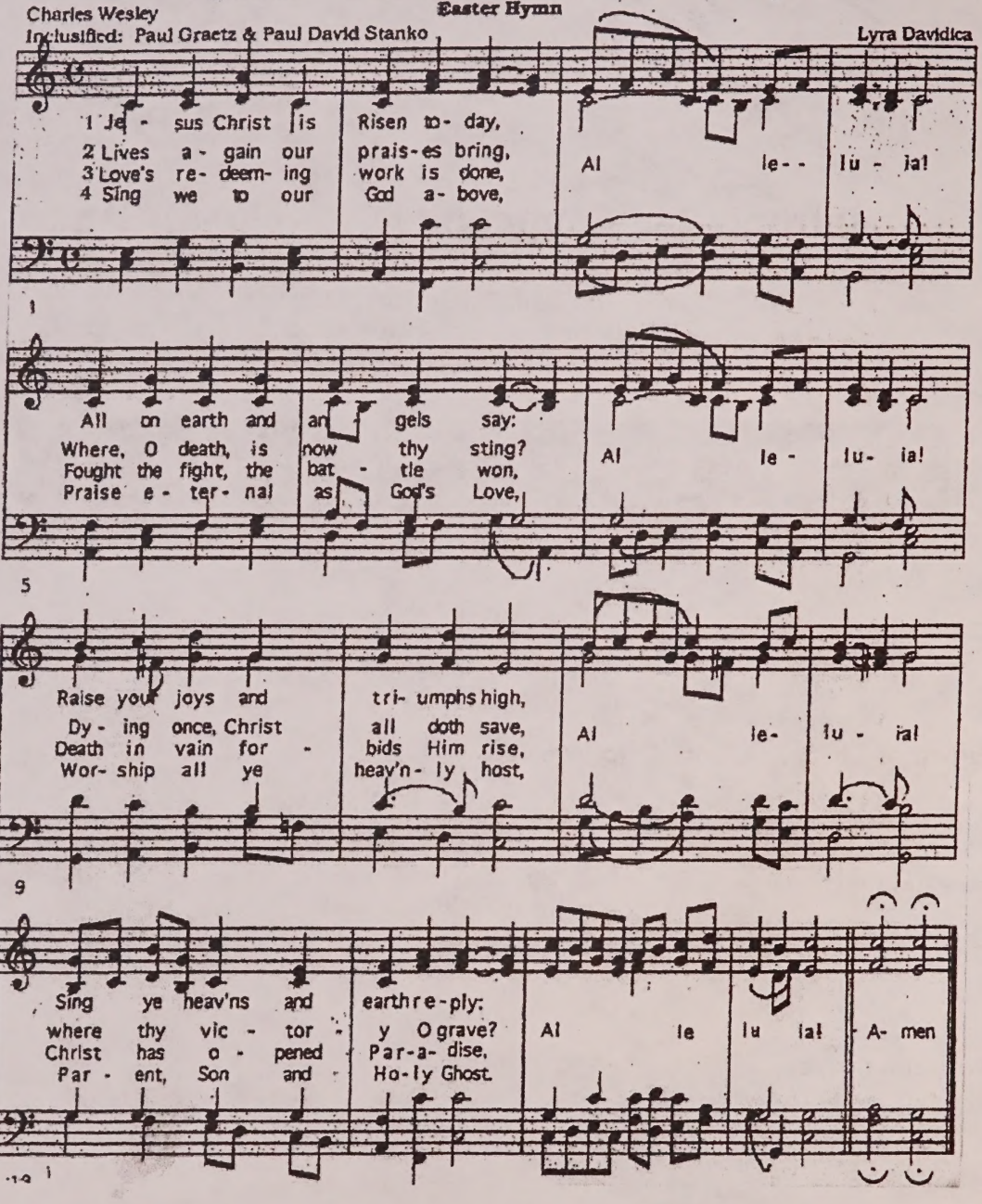
✝ Invocation Prayer

✝ Please rise in body and spirit as you are able.

Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Charles Wesley
Inclusified: Paul Gracz & Paul David Stanko

Easter Hymn

Lyra Davidica

All publication music copied by permission with CCL #241394

Exchange of Peace:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna' let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna' let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna' let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Welcome:

Invocation Prayer:

Congregational Worship in Song:

I Live!

1)I live, I live, because He is risen. I live, I live with pow'r over sin.

2) I live, I live because He is risen. I live I live to worship Him.

(chorus) Thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus.
Because You're alive, because You're alive, because You're alive, I live!

Because Christ Lives

Because Christ lives I can face tomorrow;
Because Christ lives all fear is gone;
Because I know Christ holds the future,
And live is worth the living just because Christ lives.

Prayers of and for the People:

The Lord's Prayer (sing together)

Our Creator, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever. Amen.

Ministry in Music

Please rise in body and spirit as you are able.

We Listen for God's Word

Scripture Reading:

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: A reading from the scripture— John 20:1.14

Please join in the responsive reading of the Word of God.

Leader: [1]Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw the stone had been removed from the tomb. [2]So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

People: [3]Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. [4]The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

Leader: [5] He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrapping lying there, but he did not go in. [6] Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, [7] and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. [8] Then the other disciple, the one who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; [9] for as yet they did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead. [10] Then the disciples returned to their homes. [11] But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; [12] and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been laying, one at the head, the other at the feet. [13] They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

People: She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

Leader: [14] When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. Here ends the responsive reading of the word of God.

People: Glory to you, O God, for this is the message of faith, hope and love.

The Response:

"Glory be to God, Creator of this world. And to our Savior, Christ, Whose death has saved us all Glory be to the Spirit, Whose presence makes us one. Glory be to God, the blessed Three in One. Amen."

The Sermon: "From Trauma to Triumph"
The Rev. T. Paul Graetz

Ministry in Music: First MCC Choir

We Respond to the Word

Offering of God's Tithes and Our Gifts:

Offertory:

Offertory Response:

We give Thee but Thine own,
What e'er the gift may be
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O God from Thee.

We Gather Around the Table

Sacrament of Holy Communion:
At First MCC, we serve an open communion. Everyone is welcome to participate. If you are not comfortable receiving communion, please feel free to meditate in your seat. We serve communion in the form of wafers and unfermented grape juice and we serve by intinction.

Time of Confession and Assurance:

The Great Thanksgiving:
Celebrant: God be with you.
People: And also with you.
Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them up to our God.
Celebrant: Let us give thanks to God our Creator.
People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.
Celebrant: It is right and good and a joyful thing ...

"The Sanctus"

Holy, Holy, Holy One, my heart, my heart adores You!
My heart knows how to say to You, Holy are You Lord.
(Spanish) Santo, Santo, Santo,
Mi Corazon te adora, Mi Corazon te sabe decir, Santo, eres Senor!

The Consecration:

Distribution of the Elements:

Communion Hymn:

When peace like a river attendeth my way. When sorrows like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul. It is well, with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

We Go to be People of God

Closing Announcements:

"Do Unto Others" Offering

The Benediction: The Rev. T. Paul Graetz

Recessional: "He Lives"

The Postlude:
Join us for coffee and refreshments in the church Fellowship Hall.

Time of Prayer:
After the service, Our Lay-Ministers will be available at the Altar for prayers of healing, comfort and blessings.

Our Church Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. T. Paul Graetz

Associate Pastor: Rev. Dr. Edgar Miller

Pastoral Care Minister: Rev. Chip Carson

Administrative Assistant: Mr. Rod Watkins

Sexton: Mr. Charlie Reid

Music Ministry: Melissa Kelly, Mena Johnson

Organist: Mr. Scott Dunn, Mr. Craig Murphy

Board of Directors: Rev. T. Paul Graetz, Ms. Teri Hatley, Mr. Ray Wilson, Mr. Joe Harper, Mr. Terry Baker, Ms. Martha Tanner, Mr. Lamont Alford, Mr. Tom Crouch, Mr. Nanu Nunez-Rivera.

Sign Language Interpreters: Mr. Al Whittington, Mr. Keith McWhorter.

Council of Ministries: Clare Garrard, Mike Mitchell, Mary Jones, Kathy Cannon, Andy Bartley, Chris Harris, Ray Barreras, Austin Lewis, Teri Hatley, Paige Buff, Lauren Soldwisch, John Bagwell, Erin Wertenberg, Mena Johnson, Melissa Kelly.

Phone: 404-325-4143
Fax: 404-325-8265
Email: firstmcc@mindspring.com

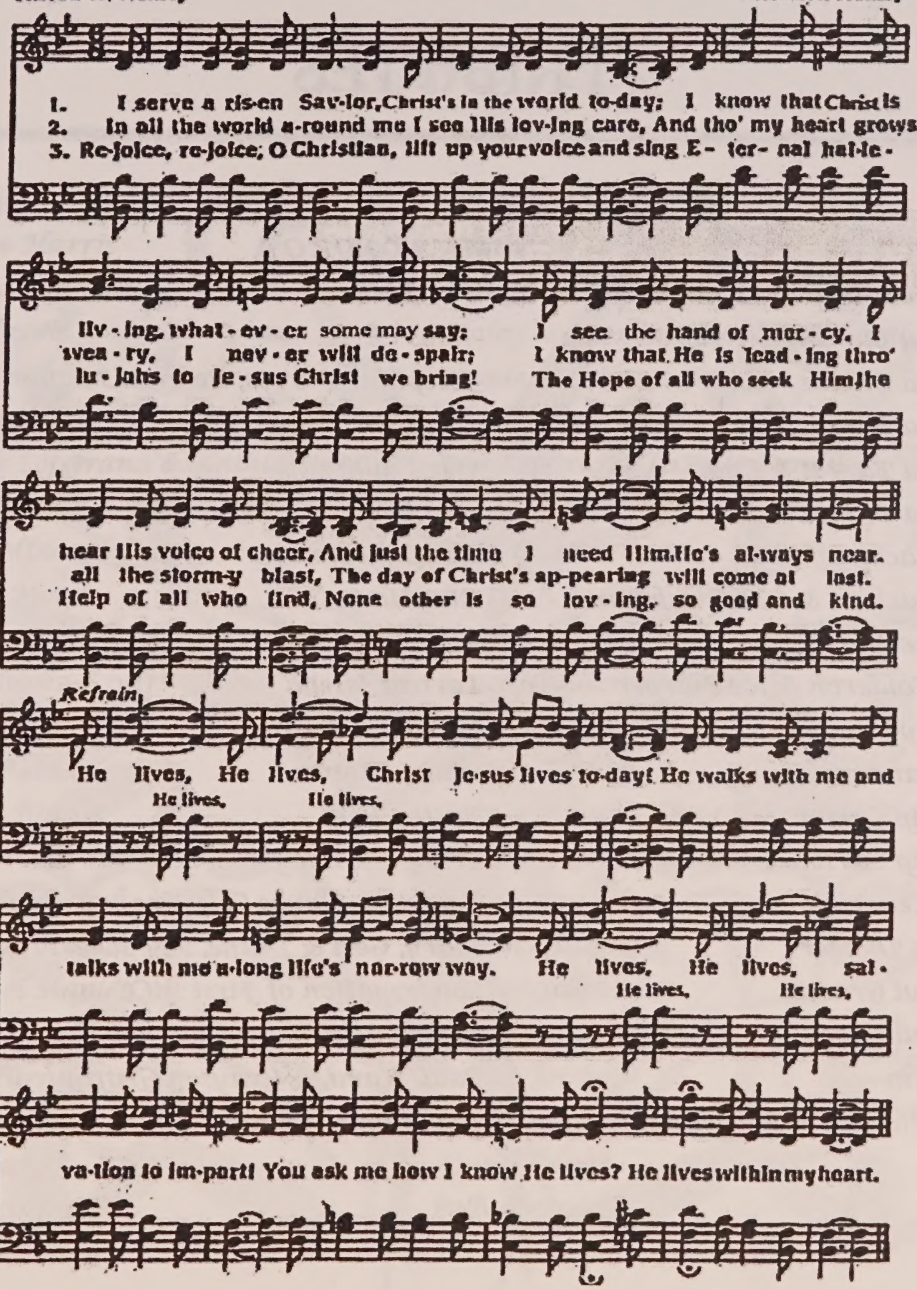
Our Web Site
www.firstmcc.com

"Sharing God's Love -- Serving Christ By Serving Others"

He Lives

Alfred H. Ackley

Alfred H. Ackley



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Easter Lily Tributes

DONOR	IN HONOR OF
Victoria Allen	My Father
Dr. Gina Barros	Jesus Christ
Dr. Gina Barros	Josephine Barros, Beloved Mother
Dr. Gina Barros	Lauren & Alisa
Dr. Gina Barros & Lisa	Our Children
Dr. Gina Barros	Lisa Clark
Tina Brackins	Lisa Blackman
Tina Brackins & Lisa Blackman	Our Moms
Lisa Blackman	Tina Brackins
Carlos Calderon & Joe Harper	Larissa Joseph
Joe Harper	Carlos Calderon
Glenn Cannon	Mary Cannon
Rev. Chip Carson	Pastor Paul
Rev. Chip Carson	Craig & Disney
Karen Celestine	Audrie & Hayes Celestine
Ramona Dugger	Mary, Geri & Diane, My Sisters
Rev. Paul Graetz	Congregation of First MCC
Rev. Paul Graetz	Robert Mixon, My Partner
Joe Griffin	Paul, Kami, & Grayson Griffin
Kathie Hamby & Rochelle Lofstrand	The Hamby Family

Easter Lily Tributes

DONOR	IN HONOR OF
Beatrice Harris	Duane
Beatrice Harris	Danyal & Dwanna
Chris Harris	Haley & Lauren, My Grand-daughters
Louis Hinton	Annie C. Hinton
Tijuan Jackson	Christ Jesus
Rochelle Lofstrand & Kathie Hamby	The Lofstrand/LaBelle Families
Mike Mitchell & Terry Baker	
Robert Mixon	Paul Graetz
Edward Moon	Bertie F. Moon
Edward Moon	Scott Gassman
Nanu Nunez-Rivers	Santa/Guillermo Nunez
Charlie Reid	Todd Dressler
Charlie Reid	Martin Bishop
Barbara Riddle	George Hruska /Ray & Francis Riddle
Rev. Leevahn Smith	Zion, My Granddaughter
Lauren Soldwisch	Alisa Lumbreras
J. Michael Staples	Martha Staples
J. Michael Staples	Walter Staples
Martha Tanner	Rev. Paul & Robert
Glenda Turner	Letitia Johnson
Mark Wargo	Harry Wargo
Mark Wargo	Anita Wargo
Tony Watkins	Polly Bernier

Easter Lily Tributes

DONOR	IN MEMORY OF
Victoria Allen	My Mother
Dr. Gina Barros	Frank Barros, Beloved Father
Dr. Gina Barros	Ron Eby
Dr. Gina Barros	Johnnie Earl Blizzard
Dr. Gina Barros	Debbie Barros, Beloved Sister
Andy Bartley	Lucy Spradlin, Grandmother
Dottie Brock	Parents & Sister
Amy Byrd	Bill Reed
Dreda Cannon	Bob Satterwhite & Nellie Sanders, Beloved Parents
Kathy Cannon	Ed Cannon, Father
Rev. Chip Carson	Bill Selvaggio
Rev. Chip Carson	Rev. Doug Johnson
Rev. Chip Carson	Miss Lee
Anne Codling	Ena & Herbert Codling
Greg Creech	Tom
Tom Crouch	Jed DeVillers
Tom Crouch	Jobier New
Amy Edwards	Nina Barton
Joe Griffin	Shane Griffin
Bill Hill	George Corder
Bill Hill	Olivia Hill
Bill Hill	Ruby Corder
Louis Hinton	Stacey Brunson
Rhonda Johns, Pat Pope, Chester Johns & Malia Pope	Carmen Kemm, Herman Chester, Clarence & Dot Pope

EASTER LILY TRIBUTES

DONOR	IN MEMORY OF
Denise King	Bessie Allen & Eva King, Grandparents
Bill Leopard	Bob Sturdivant
Bill Leopard	Russell Taylor
Bill Leopard	Errol Statum
Bill Leopard	Rev. Doug Johnson
John Manter	Florence Manter, Mother
Robert Mixon	Dennis Elliott
Robert Mixon	Curt Couch
Tony Oglesby	Henry & Alice Appling
Tony Oglesby	Nicholas Oglesby
Lynn Price	Tony Rhodes
Nanu Rivera	My Family & Friends
Rev'd. John Rogers	Mr. & Mrs. John VanCott
Biff Ryan	June Warren & Blayne Edwards
Rev. Leevahn Smith	Leatha Smith, Mother
Lauren Soldwisch	Nancy, Ruth & Carl
Lauren Soldwisch	Rev. Dr. Daryl Mitchell
Bob Stacey	Mr. & Mrs. M. L. Stacey
Bob Stacey	Mrs. Alice Arnette
Jill Stubler	Sylvia Hughes
Kathy Sumpter	Etta Duck, Grandmother
Burnie Sykes	Alan Harrington
Martha Tanner	Lyle Wells
Taimi Williams	James & Janelle Williams

That In All Things Christ Might Have The **First** Place

-- Colossians 1:18

First News

Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

"Sharing God's Love—Serving Christ By Serving Others"

A GREAT SUCCESS!

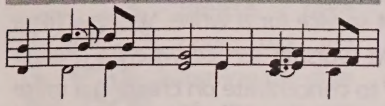
Congratulations are in order for the cast, crew, choir, dancers, narrators, interpreters and producer Erin Wertenberger on another great production. A special thanks is in order for the 60 plus who worked so hard to make this weekend a great success. There were also many behind the scenes people making a viable contribution in supportive ways. All in all, this last weekend was a great success in music and drama ministry. Those who attended were moved and touched by the pageantry, music and the message of Christ's resurrection. A total attendance including cast came to 571 people for Palm Sunday Weekend. Offerings totaled over $4,600.00. We praise God for the wonderful spirit felt through out the weekend

Welcome!

If this is your first visit, we are delighted that you have chosen to worship with us. We hope that you will feel welcome. Following the worship service, please stop by the Hospitality Table in the Narthex. Some very friendly people will welcome you, provide you with information about our ministries, and answer any questions you might have about the church. We are glad you are here.

ARE YOU RECEIVING IT? Would you like to receive weekly "News and Notes from your Pastor at First MCC"? If so, please offer us your e-mail address and we will include you. Currently the Pastor is in touch with over 70 congregant each week through e-mail. Simply print your information CLEARLY in the friendship tablets or register your e-mail address at the friendship table. Weekly e-mails, news and notes are sent from your Pastor, keeping you up on the events and ministry information of First MCC.

WELCOME OUR NEW MINISTER OF MUSIC



Dave Lambert, our new minister of music will be visiting First MCC April 18-22. He is coming with his daughter Ruth Ann to look for housing and make final preparations for his move from Harrisburg, PA to Atlanta. If you would like to host or sponsor Dave and his daughter for a meal during their stay, please sign up at the hospitality table in the narthex. This is a great time to get to know him and his family better.

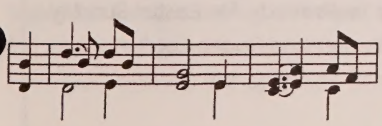
A REQUEST FROM MIKE WATSON FOR HELP

Mike Watson has asked for company and help cleaning his condo. The cleaning team will go to his condo every two to three week on what looks like will be Saturday afternoons. He also would like some regular visitors as he is beginning to feel isolated and could use company on days when he is not feeling too poorly.

If you would like to be part of this help, please give Rev. Chip a call at 404-873-0632 to let him know what day (and time of day) you are available to be scheduled to visit or that you want to be on the Saturday afternoon cleaning team. For anyone who is interested in helping, but is unsure because they don't know Mike, the cleaning team would be a wonderful opportunity.

ABOUT OUR NEW MINISTER OF MUSIC

Dave Lambert, will be joining the staff of First MCC June 1 as our minister of Music. He hails from Harrisburg, Pa where he is the minister of music at the Harrisburg Metropolitan Community Church. Dave has composed a variety of music for his congregation as well as the Mid-Atlantic District Conferences of UFMCC. Dave enjoys creating original works to go along with the theme of the worship services. This is one of the many talents and dreams he wants to share with First MCC.



WE WELCOME REV. EDGAR MILLER TO THE STAFF OF FIRST MCC

Monday evening the Board of Directors approved the hiring of Rev. Edgar Miller to the staff of First MCC. "After many interviews and a 2 month search through the district, I felt that Edgar Miller would be best to serve the congregation. His knowledge of the church, his familiarity with the congregation, his talents and skills for the task were all taken into consideration."- Pastor Paul. Edgar will be working in many areas to support the growth and development of ministry here at First MCC. He will be assisting the Pastor for the first 6 months in a diverse field of ministry. Please welcome him to our staff.

ATTENTION ALL CHOIR MEMBERS

Dave Lambert, our new Minister of Music along with current director, Melissa Kelly will be working with the Choir 7 PM on Wednesday evening April 18 and Sunday April 22. If you are in the choir you won't want to miss singing under his direction. Melissa will be directing the Choir in the outstanding piece, "We are More than Conquerors" and Dave will feature a new piece introduced to the choir during his stay. It's all part of the growing vision for music ministry at First MCC.

SPECIAL THANKS !

Thank you to all those who assisted in the Holy Week Services. This past week is one of the busiest weeks in the life and ministry of the church. From the Easter Pageant, to Wednesdays Taizé Service, the Living Lord's Supper on Thursday, Good Friday's Tenebrae Service and two services on Easter the congregation has served well. Over 100 people worked in some capacity this past week in ministry. Thank you for being a blessing.

TODAY'S EASTER LILY GARDEN

The congregation would like to express thanks to all who purchased Easter Lilies in memory or in homor of someone or something. Each of the beautiful lilies that dress the altar today have been given in special recognition. Please take a moment and look through the listings in the bulletin of those who have donated and the special causes. The proceeds from this special flower drive benefit the ministry of God through First MCC. Your generous contributions through this Easter lily garden raised $400.00.

THE CONGREGATION HAS SPOKEN

Tonight will be the last Sunday PM service for a while. We say "for a while" as we will revisit Sunday PM worship service when a greater need arises. This will allow our staff to concentrate on creating a more powerful Sunday AM and Wednesday PM ministry. Currently our Sunday PM attendances have been 5 to 10. Based on these numbers those who have attended suggested that we conclude having a Sunday PM service and revisit the need at a later time. They felt the congregation had spoken their desire based on the attendance. We considered the cost factor of keeping the doors open, lights etc, staffing with a Minister, the Pastor's prep time, the inconsistency in our volunteers and many other factors when making this decision. If a visitor did attend the PM worship they were disappointed in the small gathering and left feeling that this was not a growing ministry. We will be having a Bible Study on Wednesday nights, "Making the book of Mark Meaningful" and this will replace our "Center for Spiritual Growth". We have found that most people feel that the Sunday AM worship is meeting their need and they find it difficult to return again for a second worship service in the evening. We will revisit the need for a PM worship service this fall after our Minister of Music Dave Lambert has arrived. Dave will be able to help with worship and special music if we design a new format. Praise God, we are excited about focusing on Sunday AM and Wednesday evening programming for the future.

CHANCEL AND CHOIR LOFT ADDITIONS BEING TESTED

The new changes to the front of the sanctuary are a result of the Easter Production set design and courtesy of Erin Wertenberger. The choir would like to see if the new walls would form a better sound shell for music ministry. Over the past months we have tried various experiments to create sound shells to enhance the choir's ability to hear one another. We are testing this design so please be patient with us. Yes, it may be another change, but we are committed to a "Goldilocks principle", we will try many things, some may be too hot, others too cold, and we will search for what is "just right". Thank you to those who worked hard in getting the new walls ready for Easter Sunday. Erin Wertenberger, Mary Jones, Mike Blacker and Roger Cobb.

COME "OUT OF THE CLOSET" WITH A NEW DATE!!!

Please take note; we are moving the date of the church yard sale to May 4th and 5th. This is the first weekend of the month and due to pay cycles many are able to shop all the more! This all-church yard sale is being called *"Out of the Closet"*. We are inviting you to go through your closets, basements, and storage areas and bring in those gently used items for this fund-raising event. It's spring-cleaning time, no better moment than this to get unneeded items *out of the closet*. Bring your saleable goods to the house of God and they will be stored in Hose Hall until the time of the sale. Volunteers are needed on May 3 to price the items and begin to set up. Assistance with the sale is needed on May 4-5. Sign up today at the hospitality table in the narthex.

ANGELIC MUSIC MINISTRIES

JOIN ANGELIC MUSIC MINISTRIES FOR AN OLD FASHIONED SUNDAY DINNER & FUND RAISER!

May 6, 2001- Following Sunday Morning Worship In the Fellowship Hall

SUNDAY COUNTRY DINNER AND ALL THE FIXINGS, ENTERTAINMENT, RAFFLES AND FUN

Donate what you would spend for a Sunday meal. 10% to be returned to First MCC General fund.

OVER A THIRD OF THE CONGREGATION HAS RESPONDED!

Our Lenten journey entitled *"Covenant Keepers"*. It offers members and friends of First MCC the opportunity to say "I mean business with God" by making a new covenant with God in 5 areas. These areas are greater commitment to God in Prayer, Presence,(faithfulness to the house of God) generosity, service and spiritual growth. Our Covenant Keeper have signed a covenant or promise with God to strive to be the best they can be in the five key areas of our Christian life.

Have you noticed the many pink and purple badges that say " I am a Covenant Keeper'? Well you too can receive a badge of your own by stopping at the Friendship table in the narthex and proclaim, "I want to be a Covenant Keeper!" The host/hostess will assist you with your covenant pledge. Make this Lenten season a time of spiritual awakening and renewal; let's mean business with God.

Have you notices the scripture phrase from Colossians 1:18 appearing on periodicals, bulletins and publications at First MCC? This scripture passage states, "that in all things Christ might have the first place." What does this mean...*in all things Christ should be first.. first place?* In the following Sundays after Easter First MCC will be focusing on this scripture passage and it's importance for us as a church. It will be a journey or first step to achieving our vision and goal. Sunday April 23 we will launch this new focus for our congregation through a multi-media presentation. Don't miss church that weekend; you'll miss a turning point in the ministry of this church.

MARKETING TEAM MEETING

A Marketing team meeting will be held Tuesday April 24 at 6:30 PM. The team is continuing to work on strategies to get the "good news" out to our world. If you would like to attend you are welcome. Mike Mitchell is our Marketing director and is looking for talented people to join with ideas and willing hearts.

THE ATLANTA FEMINIST WOMEN'S CHORUS

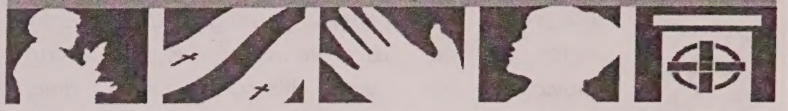
The Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus (AFWC) is excited and proud to announce its Spring concert "Zrazy for You", in which the AFWC will share the stage with the Irish jazz duo, Zrazy (Maria Walsh and Carole Nelson).

In addition to sharing the stage with Zrazy, the AFWC will entertain you with its usual eclectic selection of musical vocals. This Sprig, the emphasis is on WOMEN, with all of its musical selections written, arranged or centered around women. Most appropriately, the AFWC will sing the popular K.D. Lang Song "Constant Craving," arranged by Zrazy's own Carole Nelson as well as other challenging choral pieces with beautifully melodic vocals, especially the spiritually connected "Stone Circles."

Advance tickets $17.50 for adults/$13.00 for children, students and senior citizens. Tickets at the door: $20.00. Tickets are available through Charis, Books & More, OutWrite Books and Brushstrokes, as well as through all AFWC members.

CONCERT DATE/LOCATION
Saturday, Apr. 28, 01 @ 8:00 p.m.
Atlanta Unity Church
4146 Chamblee-Dunwoody Rd.

HOW TO FOLLOW JESUS WITHOUT EMBARRASSING GOD



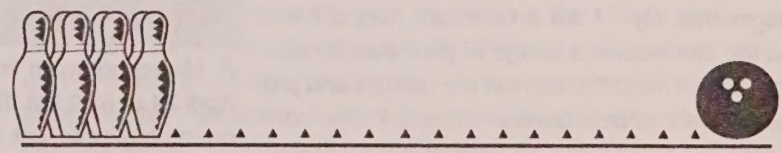
In the movie *Oh, God*, John Denver plays a young man who keeps getting messages from God that he's suppose to relate to the rest of us. In on scene, he goes to hear an evangelistic preacher who in many ways is a caricature of all the worst things in those of us who take on that role. The John Denver character interrupts the preacher's sermon to tell him that God has a special message just for him. The preacher stops the service He announces to the audience *"this young man had come with a message from God".* John Denver look straight at the preacher and says, *" God wants you to shut up because you are embarrassing God!."*

Over the years all of us have said and done things that surely must have embarrassed God. Pastor Paul will be preaching on a sermon series addressing this issue, *how to follow Jesus without embarrassing God.* It's a life-changing look at our Christian journey and all the things we do for all the wrong reasons in the name of Christianity.

Don't miss a Sunday
in this series
beginning April 23.

HEADS UP ON THE SOCIAL MINISTRY

Thanks to Louis Hinton, discounted tickets have been made available to First MCC for Six Flags over Georgia outing. The reduced fair is only $17.50 per person from now until April 28. We are making plans for a Saturday Church Social at Six Flags. Watch for details



May 5 at 3 pm First MCC will have a bowling party at Express Lanes bowling alley on Piedmont. After bowling we are going to Taco Cabana. Watch for sign up sheets at the friendship table and more details in the "First News" section of the Bulletin.

FIRST MCC FLOWER GUILD

Do you love flowers? Do you have beautiful blooms in your yard that you would like to share with the church? Are you talented in floral arranging? Do you share a vision for beauty in God's house?. Well then please read on. Edward Moon will be directing a new ministry of a flower guild to respond to the growing needs of First MCC.

We realize that the cost of a weekly large altar arrangement is growing. Some week's congregants have spent up to $100.00 for fresh flowers that may last only 1 or 2 days. Edward Moon is suggesting a flower guild of those who would like to share fresh cut flowers from their gardens, or assist in purchasing loose silk flowers to create our own arrangements throughout the building. He is willing to coordinate a team to provide fresh and silk arrangements for the congregation.

In the past we have had congregants purchase flowers in loving memory or in celebration of someone or something. We will continue to do so. The flower guild will provide those arrangements at the most affordable way possible. Your donations will enable the team to purchase realistic and quality silks, or purchase fresh flowers to supplement those donated out of congregants gardens. Either way God's house will be blessed with the beauty of flowers.

Please sign up at the hospitality table in the narthex and let us know of your interest.

MEETING TIMES

Please Note that the Council of Ministries will meet the third Tuesday of every month at 7 pm. Our board of Directors meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm starting in May. The meeting days have been changed to allow our Pastor to have a complete day off on Mondays.

HOSPITALITY

The Hospitality Ministry needs you to volunteer to host the fellowship/social hour after Sunday morning service. Just choose a Sunday that you are available and see Chris Harris to sign up and reserve that Sunday. It's a great way to meet our members and guests and a wonderful way to be of service to your church.

WANT TO JOIN FIRST MCC?

The next Membership Made Easy class will be held after the worship service on Sunday, April 29. If you are ready to take that next step inspiritual growth, this class will guide you through the easy process. Mark your calendars now! Questions? See Mike Mitchell or call the church office at 404-325-4143.

STOP BY THE RESOURCE TABLE

Stop by the resource table in the Fellowship Hall and pick up some of the latest resources. New booklets on Homosexuality and Christianity, Covenant Keepers, Why Inclusive Language, and Spiritual Gifts are available at no charge. You will also find the Worship Bulletins from previous weeks as well as pamphlets on health and community issues. These informational tools are available for you to share with friends and family.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FOLLOW-UP MINISTRY?

First MCC has received a gift of a new computer attendance and contribution-tracking program called *Servant Keeper"*. This week Rev. Chip Carson, Congregational Care and Glenn Beck, office Angel worked to begin the installation and data entry. In the next 60 days we hope to develop a stronger follow up program for this church. If you have attended in the past and missed services our present system may have missed you in reporting your absence or your presence. This new system offers us a wealth of information to assist in our congregational care and concern programs. Our follow-up ministry will be greatly improved. Along with this new computer program our recently launched "Lay Chaplains" program will complement our congregation follow-up with personal contacts. Through these efforts we are very excited about the future of this church and its' potential to minister to a growing community. In the meantime if someone says, "I've been gone from First for several weeks and no one called." please offer our apologies and let them know that we are correcting our follow up systems. Most importantly let them know that the Pastor and congregation care about them and look forward the their return to worship.

"E-PRAYER"

We are excited about the growing prayer ministry of First MCC. Lauren Soldwisch, Team leader of the Prayer ministry is forming a "renewed" prayer chain from First MCC. In an effort to let everyone know of the prayer needs of our congregation, requests will be summarized from the prayer book along with those phoned or emailed to the church and will be sent out to all those on our "E-prayer" email list. If you would like to be part of this list please contact the church office, or email your desire to be included. Prayer requests will be sent out weekly to those on the prayer chain. Please email your prayer requests to firstmcc@mindspring.com.

MAKING MARK MEANINGFUL

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority.

Mark 1:22

Join us each Wednesday night starting April 18 for an exciting and informational Bible study on the book of Mark. Together we will follow the story of Jesus as the author Mark tells it in clearest form. Without a doubt, it is the most uncomplicated of the Gospels and the easiest to understand. This Bible study is for beginners and advanced alike. The book of Mark will be our text for a spiritual journey that wakes up the scripture and brings new meaning for this gospel text. When's the last time you read through an entire book of the Bible? Don't miss a Wednesday in the series!

FIRST MCC BUILDING COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

BUILDING

Do you have an interest in design and decorating? Do floor plans and trips to Home Depot get you excited? Then join First MCC's Building and Grounds Committee. This committee will be in charge of developing an overall design scheme for our church and also prioritizing remodeling/maintenance work around the church. This will include interior and exterior improvements. Those with design and construction experience are encouraged to join us!

Questions? We would like to meet today, April 8th, 15 minutes following the 11:00 worship service. See Lamont Alford and Terry Baker for details.

This Week at First MCC

Today — Sunday, April 15, 2001

- *9:30 a.m.—Joyful Sabbath Prayer Time*
- *11:00 a.m.— Morning Worship*
- *6:30 p.m.— Evening Worship*

Wednesday, April 18, 2001

- *7:00 p.m.. — Choir Practice (Choir Room)*
- *7:30 p.m. — Mid-week Worship Service*

Tithes and Offerings
April 8-11, 2001 — $4392.00

According to our ministry plan of service, our budgeted income expected on average per week is $4900.00. Due to the graciousness and faithfulness of our members and friends, last week we received $2587.00. We thank you for the use of your resources. Because of you, we can continue to build the souls of people by meeting their needs and healing human hurts through the many ministries of our church. Your abundant giving is making a difference in the lives of people.

Attendance: 571

F. Y. I.

You can advertise your business in our weekly news for just $25.00 a month. We encourage everyone to support the businesses that graciously support First MCC. For more information on advertising, contact Rod Watkins, Office Administrator at 404-325-4143 or firstmcc@mindspring.com

NEW PLAQUES IN THE BOOKSTORE

Looking for something new for your walls or far a gift? Stop by the bookstore and view the new inspirational plaques created by artist Steve Vargo. Each colorful plaster cast plaque is $20 and features inspirational sayings.

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*** Bring in this ad and receive 50% off X-Rays and Exam ***

NOTES

CELEBRATING IN APRIL

Terri Cobb—6th
Joe Harper—7th
Karon McGrath—8th
Cynthia Young— 8th
Drea Guzman—9th
Shannon Williams— 10th
Caleb Newton—15th
Daniel Lewis—16th
John Moore—17th
Jim Christ—22nd
Joanne Pantano—22nd
James Ford—23rd
Tiffany Longdottir—23rd
Scott Tyler—23rd
Eddie Owens—24th
Ashley McCann—25th
Tina Brackins—27th
Cindy Blitchington-Davis—28th
Jean Campbell—29th
Vicki James—29th
Bob Johns—30th

New Prayer Request
April 15-20, 2001

Martha Tanner's Grandson	Healing
Carlos Calderon	Guidance
Stacy Blackburn & Tracy Frost	Healing/strength
Angie Hilton/Amy Edwards	Travel Mercies
Angel Blacker's Father	Healing
Melissa	Healing
Terry Baker	Grieving
"Mark"	Acceptance/Forgiveness
Ruben Lopez	Strength/Guidance
"Ginnie"	Healing from Cancer
Denise King	Healing/Strength for Mother
FMCC	Harmony
Cecilia Harrelson	Healing
"Jeff and Dennis"	
Edval Hewes & family	Healing
"Carol"	job
Laura Murray	Strength/courage
Mike Watson	Healing/Peace/Hope/Strength
"Jennifer"	Guidance
G. Turner	Family health/peace/love
Excell	God's blessings
Bobby Timms	Healing
"Baby Alex"	protection
Michelle McCrary	Guidance/peace/Job
M. Madden	Praise
Mary	Travel Mercies

Holy Union Questionaire

Holy Union Questionnaire

This questionnaire is confidential. The answers are to help the counselor, yourself and your intended. They are designed to find out more about one another. The answers given will be discussed in your Holy Union counseling session. There are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire is designed to find any major differences between you and you intended, so please answer all questions honestly to the best of you knowledge. Answering any other way may result in an inaccurate assessment of your relationship.

Name:_____Date:_____

Address:_____

Telephone:(___)_____Date of Birth:_____Place:_____

Marital Status(for gay or non-gay relationships): SINGLE DIVORCED MARRIED/HOLY UNION

Name of Intended Spouse:_____Age:_____

Children: (names)_____

Ages of Children as listed above:_____

Date that you and intended first met:_____

Date you started dating exclusively:_____

Are you and your intended living together?_____If yes, what date did you move in together?_____

Do you own or keep a home separate from the one in which you now live?_____

If so, state reason:_____

Please list your hobbies, interests and any other outside relaxation you enjoy:_____

_____

How many years of school have you attended?_____

Where did you and you intended first meet? _____

Personal Family Background

Are your parents still living? Mother_____Father_____

Your parents are STILL MARRIED / DIVORCED. If divorced, have they remarried? Mother__Father__

How many brothers?_____# older_____# younger_____

How many sisters?_____# older_____#younger_____

Do your parents know that you are homosexual?_____

How do they act toward you?_____

_____

Are they aware of this step that you are about to make?_____

If so, are they supportive of your Holy Union?_____

How do your parents get along with your intended spouse?_____

_____

Do your siblings know that you are homosexual?_____If so, please write briefly on their reaction toward you._____

_____

_____

How do your siblings get along with your intended?_____

_____

How do you feel that you get along with your intended's siblings?_____

_____

How well do you get along with your intended's parents?_____

_____

Have there been any problems between your intended and your personal family that might have an influence on your life later?_____If so, please explain:_____

_____

_____

How often do you see your personal family? _____

How often do you think your intended should see his/her family?_____

How would you handle the following: Your family has just told you that they accept you and love you, but they cannot accept the fact that you are with your current lover. Therefore, they have said you can come over and visit anytime, but you cannot bring your intended – ever!_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Children in the Family

Do you have any children living with you?_____If so, how many? _____

Do you have any children who are not living with you?_____If so, how many?_____

Do you plan on having children in the future?_____If not, why?_____

_____

If so, how will you have them? Adoption?_____Other method?_____

Who would have them? YOU INTENDED

How many children do you want?_____Which of you would be the disciplinarian? YOU INTENDED

Why?_____

_____

Do you feel that children would or do interfere with your relationship together?_____

If so, why?_____

If not, explain._____

Work and Finance Accommodations

Place of Employment:_____

Position:_____Hours:_____

Day's off:_____Wages per month:_____How long at present employment?_____

Does your work ever cause disagreements between you and your intended?_____

Explain: _____

_____

Do your co-workers know that you are homosexual?_____If not, do you want them to know?_____

If they do know, are there any added pressures stemming from them knowing?_____

Explain: _____

How would you handle it if your spouse lost his/her job?_____

_____

_____

Do you have separate or joint banking accounts?_____

If separate, does your paycheck get deposited in: Your account / Intended's account?

Does your pay belong to: you / your intended / both?

What arrangements have you made for payment of bills you each had before you met or began living together?

_____

_____

What arrangements have you made for payment of bills that both of you owe within your relationship?

I.e.: electricity, gas, furnishings, clothes, credit cards.

_____

_____

Should this relationship be dissolved in the future, have you written a contract as to how the mutual personal effects would be split? YES / NO

If so, how? _____

Do you have a written contract concerning support or non-support? YES / NO

Explain: _____

Have you discussed wills and how you plan to protect your spouse from your own family, the law and taxes should something happen to you? YES / NO

Explain: _____

Should there be any, have you discussed who would take the children in case of a break up or death of the natural parent? YES / NO

Explain: _____

Religion

Do you have a personal belief in God? YES / NO

What is your religious background? _____

Do you consider yourself a Christian and a believer of Jesus Christ? YES / NO

Are you now attending a place of worship? YES / NO

If Yes, Are you a member of MCC? YES / NO

If no, why have you sought out a Christian Church to have your Holy Union performed?

_____

Where does God fit in your relationship? _____

What does a Holy Union mean to you?_____

_____

How long to you plan to make the Holy Union contract for? _____

Since a Holy Union is not legal in the state of _____, why are you seeking one? _____

_____

When did the two of you first discuss the possibility of a Holy Union? _____

Personal Relationship

When did you first realize that you were gay / lesbian? _____

How did you accept this fact? _____

Do you ever feel that you do not completely accept your sexuality? YES / NO

Have you had other relationships with persons of the same sex? YES / NO

Does your intended know all of your past lovers? YES / NO

Are you still friends with these people? YES / NO

Why did you break up with those relationships prior to your present one? _____

_____

Have you discussed these problems and reasons with your intended spouse? YES / NO

Explain: _____

What is different about this relationship that you want to seek out a long-term, possibly life, commitment?

_____

Please explain anything in your past that you would like to share with your lover, but haven't up to this time:

_____

_____

What part does fidelity play in your relationship? _____

Holy Union Questionnaire

_____

What part does jealousy play in your relationship? _____

_____

Who is more jealous? YOU / INTENDED How do the two of you cope with this? _____

_____

Where does trust fit into your relationship? _____

_____

What does "forgiveness" mean to you? _____

_____

How do roles play a part of your relationship? Please be specific. _____

_____

_____

Who should be responsible for doing household chores? YOU / INTENDED / BOTH

When there is a major decision to be made, who makes that decision and who implements the decision? YOU / INTENDED / BOTH

How many times a month are sufficient for going out to relax? _____

What do you like to do when you relax and where do you like to do it? _____

_____

Do you feel that your communication with one another is open? YES / NO

Are you able to speak freely of all your feelings and beliefs? YES / NO

Do you have mutual friends? YES / NO Do you have separate friends? YES / NO

Does your intended accept his/her friends from before you met? YES / NO

Is there any conflict about this? _____

If you felt you could, safely, what is the one thing that you would like to tell your intended that you haven't as of this time? _____

What do you expect from this relationship? _____

_____

Holy Union Questionnaire

Do you plan on living your life as openly gay/lesbian or closeted? Explain: _____

_____

_____

When the two of you have a fight, how do you usually solve your differences? _____

_____

What course of action is taken? _____

_____

What is the worst fight or disagreement you've had in your present relationship? _____

_____

How was the conflict solved? _____

_____

When you are mad or angry have either of you become violent? YES / NO

Explain: _____

_____

Do either of you leave the house in the middle of a disagreement? YES / NO

If so, where do either of you go? _____

If you were on vacation together and discovered you only had one toothbrush and it belonged to your spouse, what would you do? _____

You have planned a big night out on the town. You've invited two other couples to join you. You come home from work, with the other two couples, only to find your spouse lying on the couch and not feeling well.

1. If you spouse insisted, would you go without him/her? YES / NO

2. If you were the sick one, would you want him/her to stay? YES / NO

3. What would you tell your friends who were waiting? _____

_____

4. What would you prefer to do? _____

If this Holy Union should be denied at this time or postponed a the request of the counselor, what would your response be? What would you do or say? _____

_____

Sexual Encounters

Do you plan to have an open relationship where either of you may have sexual encounters with people other than your spouse? YES / NO

Do you plan on a polygamous union which would involve three or more people over the years? YES / NO

Do you plan a monogamous union which limits your sexual encounters to your spouse only? YES / NO

How would you respond if your spouse went out with someone else after your Holy Union? _____

_____

If your spouse came to you and wanted to have an extra person involved in a sexual encounter with the two of you, would you agree to it? YES / NO

Do you have fantasies that you would like to share with your lover? YES / NO

Have you shared any? YES / NO If not, why? _____

_____

Have you talked to your intended, communicating your likes and dislikes about sex? YES / NO

Who would you prefer to be more sexually aggressive? YOU / YOUR INTENDED

Do you find the two of you are compatible in thought and ideas sexually? YES / NO

Do you prefer to be sexually active in the MORNING / AFTERNOON / EVENING ?

How many sexual encounters per week would you consider sexually satisfying? _____

Do you ever fake being satisfied just to please your lover? YES / NO

How important is sex in your relationship as a whole? What percentage? _____

On the blank page attached, answer the following:

A. What makes you truly believe that this relationship is going to work out better than others that have not?

B. Explain how the discussion came about for the two of you to go together, live together, etc. Share the gist of the discussion.

Good Friday Service

First Metropolitan
Community Church
of Atlanta

April 13, 2001

7:30 P.M.

That In All Things Christ Might Have The **First** Place

-- Colossians 1:18

First

Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

Friday, April 13, 2001—Good Friday Service
Rev. T. Paul Graetz, Senior Pastor

We Gather to Worship

Prelude for Gathering: Scott Dunn, Organist

Ringing of Chimes Calling Us To Worship:

Call To Worship:

Leader: Fear and fascination drew observers to the first Holy Friday. These emotions have attracted people ever since.

People: We cannot flee the pain and suffering which Jesus experienced on our behalf.

Leader: We wonder why one so faithful and loving had to face the agony of rejection and death.

People: Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

Leader: In this time of worship, we join Christ at Calvary aware of our involvement in the cruelty there.

People: Our faithfulness is tested at the cross, and the lives are judged by our response.

✝ Processional Hymn: "And Can It Be that I Should Gain"

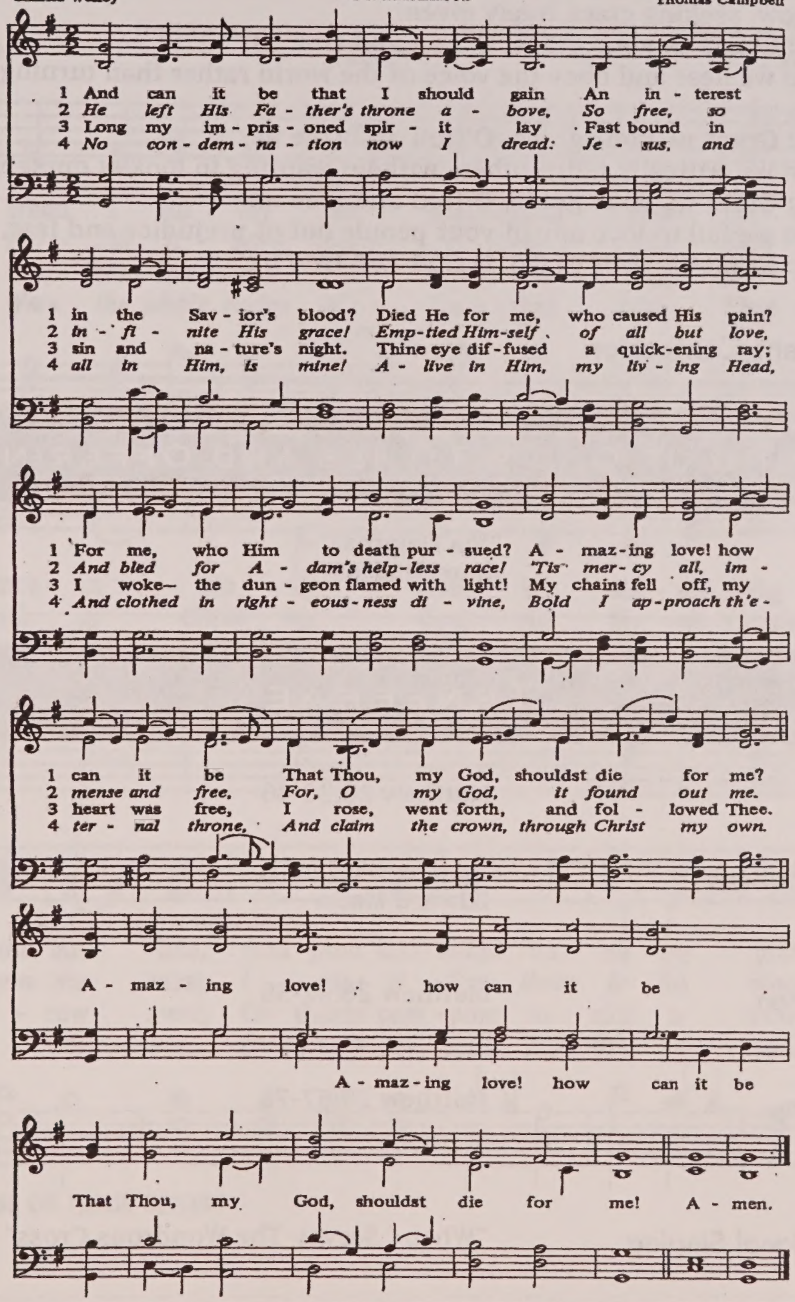
✝ Please rise in body and spirit as you are able.

And Can It Be That I Should Gain?

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but . . . salvation, by our Lord Jesus Christ.
— I Thessalonians 5:9

Charles Wesley

SAGINA
Thomas Campbell



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Petition of Grace

Leader: In Jesus Christ, God came among us to save us from sin and death. In walking to the cross, Christ freed us from the bondage of guilt and judgment. We come before God now, seeking grace freely given.

People: Grant us your grace, O God and free us.

Leader: When we hear and obey the voice of the world rather than turning to you for guidance.

People: Grant us your grace, O God and free us.

Leader: When we critically judge others without wanting to look at ourselves,

People: Grant us your grace, O God and free us.

Leader: When we fail to love any of your people out of prejudice and fear,

People: Grant us your grace, O God and free us.

Time of Silent Confession

Giving of God's Tithes and Offerings

Offertory	"Via Delarosa" Angel Blacker

Tenebrae

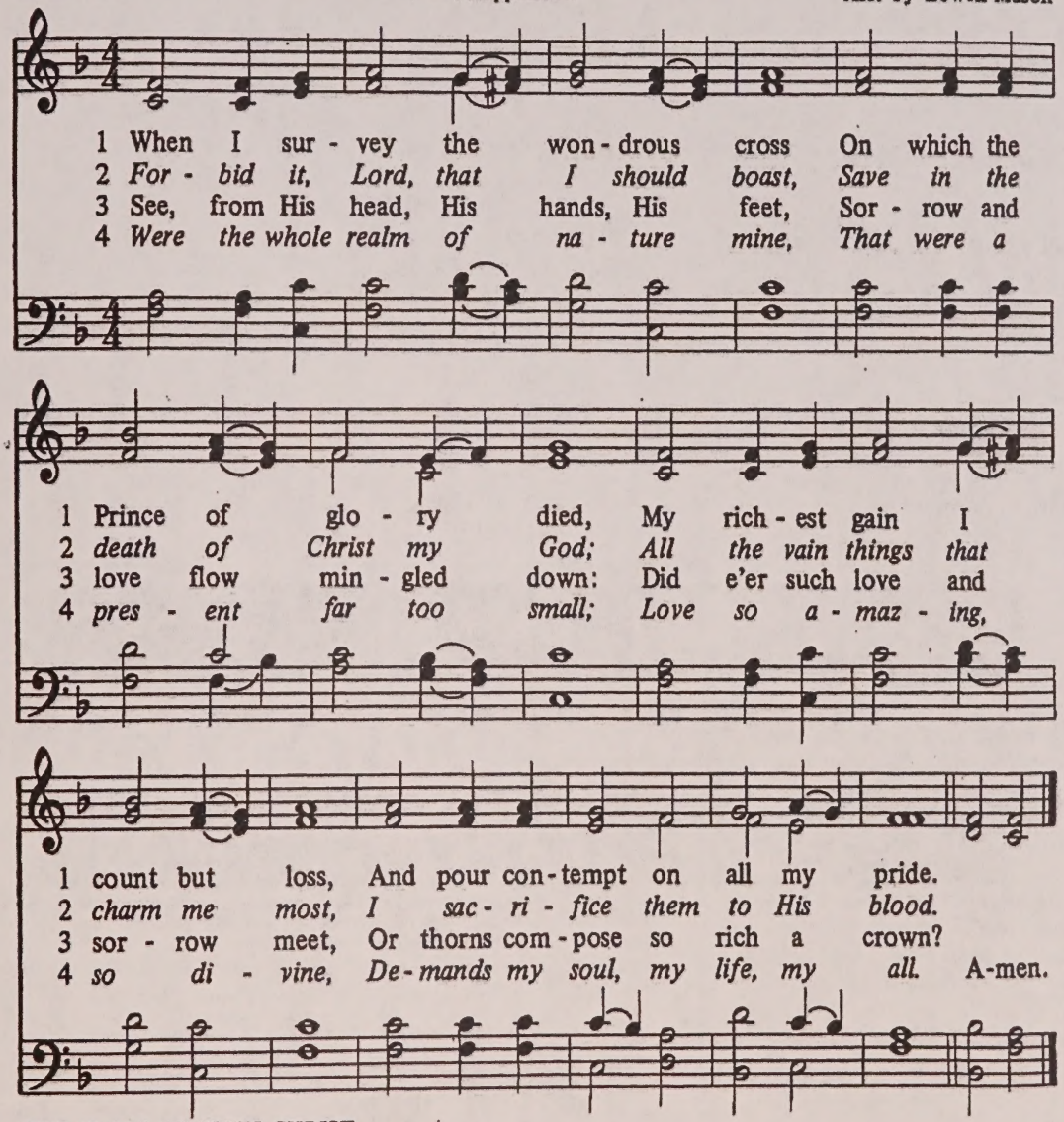
First Lesson	Matthew 26:30-46
Music Meditation	"In The Garden" Edward Moon
Second Lesson	Matthew 26:47-56
Third Lesson	Matthew 26:57-75
Congregational Singing	"When I Survey The Wondrous Cross"

Please rise in body and spirit as you are able.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Isaac Watts

What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.
— Philippians 3:7

HAMBURG
Based on Gregorian Chant
Arr. by Lowell Mason

THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST

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Fourth Lesson	Matthew 27:1-5
Fifth Lesson	Matthew 27:6-23
Music Ministry	"The Old Rugged Cross" Roger Cobb
Sixth Lesson	Matthew 27:24-31
Seventh Lesson	Matthew 27:32-44
Music Ministry	"If That Isn't Love" Rev. T. Paul Graetz
Eighth Lesson	Matthew 27:45-50
Ninth Lesson	Matthew 27:51-54
Music Ministry	"Were You There" Melissa Kelly

Recessional

The Recessional of the Light of Hope
As you leave the sanctuary in reflection and silence, please nail your nail to the cross.

Our Church Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. T. Paul Graetz

Associate Pastor: Rev. Dr. Edgar Miller

Pastoral Care Minister: Rev. Chip Carson

Administrative Assistant: Mr. Rod Watkins

Sexton: Mr. Charlie Reid

Music Ministry: Melissa Kelly, Mena Johnson

Organist: Mr. Scott Dunn, Mr. Craig Murphy

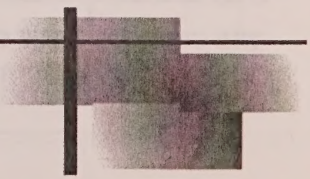
Board of Directors: Rev. T. Paul Graetz, Ms. Teri Hatley, Mr. Ray Wilson, Mr. Joe Harper, Mr. Terry Baker, Ms. Martha Tanner, Mr. Lamont Alford, Mr. Tom Crouch, Mr. Nanu Nunez-Rivera.

Sign Language Interpreters: Mr. Al Whittington, Mr. Keith McWhorter.

Council of Ministries: Clare Garrard, Mike Mitchell, Mary Jones, Kathy Cannon, Andy Bartley, Chris Harris, Ray Barreras, Austin Lewis, Teri Hatley, Paige Buff, Lauren Soldwisch, John Bagwell, Erin Wertenberg, Mena Johnson, Melissa Kelly.

Phone: 404-325-4143
Fax: 404-325-8265
Email: firstmcc@mindspring.com

Our Web Site
www.firstmcc.com



"Sharing God's Love -- Serving Christ By Serving Others"

LIVING LORD'S SUPPER

Curtain Closed - - Lights out in auditorium - - Cross in revolving light
(Cross in front of blue dividers with one red, one white, and one revolving light on it, to be placed on left hand side where piano regularly is)

Master's Image open with "Cross Medley" - only light will be on cross

(Stage is set with wooden table draped with white tablecloth - with table settings for 13 people - plastic fruits - loaf of bread and grape juice in goblet for communion and various pitchers and wicker baskets -- black curtain is closed with black light at extreme front of stage lying on the floor covered by a grass effect -- box lights set where possible to adequately light up table without interferring with disciple march -- spot light in balcony) possible isle lights

Organ music will continue throughout march.

Spot will follow each character during march from back of isle to center stage then on to next character.

READER:
Someone has said, "It is not the length of a life but the quality of the life that i important." Jesus Christ the Savior is a perfect example.

SING

(Jesus begins walk down isle wearing an outer coat which will be removed once back-stage)

READER: (Jesus center stage)
Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, thus fulfilling the prophesies. He knew from the beginning His purpose was to give His life on Calvary to redeem lost sinners. His public ministry was short. It began late at about the age of 30. At the age of 33, He gave His life on the cross. Three or three and one-half years at most. Yet, they were marked with powerful and incessant activity that left its mark on the world for all time. His disciples marvelled at it, and He accounts for it by the fact that, "He had much to do and little time to do it in."

The twelve apostles whom He selected were needed to bear witness to His own deeds and work. He ordained them that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and have power to heal the sick and cast out devils.

After His ascension, it became the chief part of their mission to bear witness of the fact of His resurrection, a fundamental truth in the system of the Gospel. For this duty it was essential that their personal contact with Him should be constant.

The Apostles will be introduced in the order given in Matthew 10:2

TO SING CHORUS: (As Peter and Andrew begin walk)

(Organ will play background music throughout the introduction of the Apostles)

Spot picks up Simon Peter and Andrew at back of isle and follows them both to front of isle where it then follows Peter to center stage and when introduction of Peter is finished, it will pick up Andrew. It will follow this procedure for all the Apostles.

READER: (As Peter and Andrew walk down isle)
Simon Peter and Andrew, brothers, sons of Bar-Jonas.

(As Peter walks to center stage) Peter: (Simon, called Peter) Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ the Son of the Living God." Peter's dominate spiritual attribute is faith. Although Andrew was the one who brought Peter to Jesus, Peter is mentioned first in Matthew 10:2 where the disciples are named. Perhaps because of his outstanding leadership. Jesus called Peter "the rock", a symbol of strong immovable faith.

He lived first at Bethsadia and later at Capernaum in a large house his mother-in-law owned. He was a prosperous fisherman when he was called to follow Jesus. In the beginning his nature was firey and impulsive and it was not easy for him to give up all that he might follow the Master. Yet, he renounced the world, became a brave and worthy disciple, and finally was called by Jesus to lead the disciples in the work they must do after the crucifixion.

The passage of scriptures of Acts 4:13 where it was said, Peter and John were unlearned and ignorant men, does not necessarily mean that they were illerate, but rather, they were laymen, men of ordinary education in contrast with those who were educated in the schools of the Rabbis.

That he was an affectionate husband and married in early life, are facts inferred from the scripture. Clement of Alexandria tells us his wife's name was Perpetua and that she had children.

Peter was told by Jesus that he would "deny Him three times", which he did. He suffered great remorse. However, Peter became a great, inspired leader not only for the original little band of disciples, who became "apostles", but for the seventy" other disciples sent forth, and for all the early christians who followed Jesus the Christ even in the face of persecution, exile, and death.

Peter preached the gospel all of his life. Mark served as Peter's interpreter and writer. The gospel of Mark based upon Peter's Aramic records, is known as "The Gospel of Action."

Andrew: His dominate spiritual attribute is strength. The first real friend that Jesus had was Andrew, and the strength he showed was primarily strength of character. Like Peter his brother, for whom he worked, he was a fisherman on the sea of Galilee.

Andrew was called "the introducer" for it was he who introduced his brother to Jesus as soon as he knew he was the "True Messiah".

He brought before Him the little boy with the loaves and fishes when Jesus fed the 5,000 hungry people, and it was he that introduced the first of the Greeks to Jesus.

Andrew was there when John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the river Jordan. Andrew was a gentle man for he did all things with gentleness and love. He preached the Gospel to many Asiatic nations.

JAMES AND JOHN: (As they walk down isle) Brothers, and cousins to Jesus. Their mother was Salome, sister of Mary, Christ's mother.

JAMES: James the elder, or James the great.

Although John, his brother, became a follower of Jesus first, as in the case of Andrew and Peter, James is mentioned before John in Matthew 10:2. Perhaps he was the elder.

Mark 1:19 "And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending nets."

James was a fisherman and fished with his father, Zebedee, and his brother, John. The two brothers were called "Sons of Thunder". Brave men, who sailed the sea in little fishing boats in stormy as well as good weather.

Representing wisdom and discernment, or good judgement, the vital spiritual faculties required for a balanced life, James was one of the disciples who was part of the "inner circle". He went with Jesus as did John and Peter to the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before the crucifixion.

JOHN: I John 9:8 -- John the disciple says "God is Love". John's dominate spiritual attribute is love. Known as the beloved disciple, John represents the highest power and the strongest christian quality - Love.

His occupation was that of a fisherman. John showed his courage and devotion in many ways. It was he who stayed at the foot of the cross, comforting Mary, mother of Jesus. John was the first to recognize Jesus after His resurrection. Returning from a fishing trip, he looked toward the shore and saw the lone figure of a man whom he recognized as Jesus. In this portrait, we see John looking forward to the shore and saying, "It is our Lord."

Jesus loved this disciple as a brother, and it was into John's care that He committed His mother, saying, "Woman, behold thy son."

John lived to be a very old man. The Bible tells us he was seen in Jerusalem fifteen years after Paul's first visit. He was sent into exile on the isle of Patmos and it was there that he wrote the inspired book of the Bible, "The Revelations."

PHILIP - BARTHOLOMEW - THOMAS

PHILIP: John 1:44 - 45 --Philip found Nathanial and said to him, "we have found Him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Philip's dominate spiritual attribute is power. Because he knew the Greek language so well, Philip was called "The Greek", but he was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, and lived in Galilee as they did.

Philip, a powerful vital man, was among the first to join the little band of men as a chosen disciple of Jesus. He it was, who brought Nathanial, or Bartholomew to Jesus.

Philip, using the power of the Word, as he and the disciples were empowered to do in Jesus' name, healed the sick and cast out "unclean spirits". His difficulty in understanding the spiritual meaning of Jesus' message at times, did not seem to hinder his wonderful power to cure the lame and paralyzed in this way.

BARTHOLOMEW: or Nathanael. Born in Cana of Galilee. John 1:47 - - Jesus saw Bartholomew coming to Him and said of him: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Bartholomew has imagination as his dominate spiritual attribute. The quality of imagination represented in Bartholomew was the divine "imagining" quality of creativeness through which spiritual ideas were made manifest. When Philip found Nathanael sitting under the fig tree, and told him he had found the Messiah, Nathanael's first reply was: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Nathanael, or Bartholomew, was one of the first six men chosen as a disciple by Jesus. Jesus recognized him as a man of vision and imagination. Philip bade him, "come and see", and when he had come to Christ, and was convinced, he declared: "Thou art the Son of God.. Thou art the King of Israel".

As Bartholomew, after Pentecost, he traveled with Philip throughout the East - to Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt and Armenia.

THOMAS: His Greek name was Didymus, meaning a twin -- John 20:28, Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and My God".

Thomas reveals understanding as his dominate spiritual attribute.

A fisherman who worked with Peter and Andrew, Thomas is known as the "doubting one" who came to believe. Because he had not been present when Jesus first appeared to the disciples after the crucifixion. Thomas said, "Unless I see in His hands the prints of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and my hand in His side, I will not believe". Later when Jesus again appeared to the disciples, Thomas was the one who fell immediately to his knees crying out to Jesus, "My Lord and my God", expressing even greater understanding than the others had revealed. He was the kind of man that gradually "unfolds" by searching, inquiring, discovering -- the mind which seeks truth that it may believe.

He later preached the Gospel at Parthia and Persia and organized the Christian church in India.

MATTHEW, JAMES AND THADDEUS: were brothers and Jesus' cousins. Sons of Alpheus. Mother was Mary, sister of Mary, mother of Jesus.

MATTHEW: Luke 5:28 "and he left everything, and rose and followed Him."

Matthew's dominate spiritual attribute is will.

Like most of the disciples, Matthew, at one time called Levi, was a native of Galilee. A publican or tax collector, and a money changer. Matthew was a well-educated and wealthy man, who had more worldly goods to give up than some of the other disciples. He seems like unlikely material for a disciple, but Jesus in His great wisdom, looked into the heart of a man called Levi and said; "Follow Me", and the man we know as Matthew arose, forsook all that he had and followed Jesus.

Matthew is noted for his interest and determination in proving Jesus to be the true "Messiah" promised by Old Testament prophets. A great debt of gratitude is owed to this disciple, for it was Matthew who preserved the exact words of Jesus. Although the spiritual attribute Matthew represents is will, the lesson we learn from him is that we are to surrender the human will to the will of God, saying: "Not my will, but Thy will be done".

The scene of his labors was Parthia and Ethiopia.

JAMES: James the less. -- Called "James the Less" because he was younger than James the brother of John. He was also younger than his brother, Thaddeus.

James the Less has order as his dominate spiritual attribute. James, who was said to have been the first bishop of Jerusalem, was highly respected for his knowledge of law, and he represents "law and Order" in this series. Paul speaks of James the Less as being in Jerusalem as the first Bishop, and he wrote that he had visited James.

In the spiritual connotation, the attribute order as represented in the disciple James the Less, means universal law and order, or principle. His mother was called Mary and was one of the women who accompanied Christ at the crucifixion and resurrection. He was also later in the upper room.

THADDEUS: His name was Jude or Judas and is called the brother of James in Luke 6:16. But he was called Thaddeus, to carefully distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, the traitor. John 14:22. Judas, not Iscariot, said unto him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?"

Judas, or Thaddeus' dominate spiritual attribute is renunciation.

In the epistle of Jude, he warns against false values and penalties for believing in the false gods of a material world. He urged the ungodly to renounce all which would separate them from the goodness of God. After Pentecost, Jude traveled to Arabia, Syria, and to Persia, where he is believed to have preached the Gospel until the end of his life.

SIMON and JUDAS

SIMON: Simon the Zealot. A title used to distinguish him from Simon Peter. He is also called Simon the Canaanite. Luke 6:15 "And Matthew and Thomas and James the son of Alphaeus and Simon who was called the zealot".

Simon's dominate spiritual attribute is zeal.

Simon the Zealot, had been of the Zealot sect, a rebel party; heirs to the fighting spirit of the Maccabees. They looked upon taxation as slavery, and though their purpose was a righteous one (since they wanted no other rule but God), they had not learned the folly of using their zeal in the unrighteous way of violence. Simon who represents the fiery Zealot with a cause, did finally become gentle and loving through his association with Jesus and the other disciples, and he made the ministry his life's dedicated work.

Simon was present at the last supper and also at Pentecost. Because of his nature, he always believed that Jesus had come to establish a Kingdom on earth, and like others, he was sure that Jesus would eventually overthrow the Roman rule.

Simon was reported to have gone as a missionary to Babylon, and the Black sea area after Pentecost, and he finished his life work in the land known as Great Britain.

JUDAS: Judas Iscariot -- Son of Simon Iscariot. He is the apostle who betrayed the divine Lord. By being named Iscariot he was distinguished from the other apostle Judas, or Thaddeus. He was a native of Keriot in the south of Judah, and according to this, Judas Iscariot was a Judean. He was the only apostle from Judea; all the rest of the apostles were Galileans. His name is never mentioned in the scriptures without some designation of disgrace and shame. Why he should have been chosen as a follower of Christ, no one can sufficiently explain. Yet, there must have been, originally, elements of good. There was surely the possibility of development into usefulness. But he cherished the passion of greed while in the company of Christ, and the inevitable reaction was so great and rapid he soon degenerated into a thief and a traitor and hence, he became infuriated when he perceived that his Master had read his heart, and in the madness of rage he sold the innocent one for thirty pieces of silver.

Matthew 27:4 - - Judas who betrayed him repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver saying, "I have betrayed innocent blood", and he went away and hanged himself.

Judas represents the attribute of life "redeemed or betrayed". Judas who betrayed the Master actually symbolizes the "life conserver", for the Judas function generates the life of the body.

Judas governs the life consciousness, in the symbolic sense, and its lowest expression as "sensation" must be divinely guided and "redeemed" if the Christ is not to be betrayed.

When the Chief Priests rejected the thirty pieces of silver, Judas was filled with such great remorse, he hanged himself.

(Spot is off and lights on cross are brought up)

READER: Finally, as the shadow of the cross began to fall more heavily upon Him, and the tide of opposition rose higher and higher, Jesus turned away from the crowds and took His disciples aside for special training to help prepare them for what was to come.

(Cross dims out as curtain opens to last supper scene -- full stage lights as well as rectangle spot light covering full table scene.)

READER: As we look on this scene and remember the sacredness of this night, our minds race back to the scriptures which tell us that Christ was the Lamb slain even before the foundation of the world: God the Father -- willing to give His only begotten Son. Jesus the Son -- willing to give His life.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Disciples are seated.

READER: The order of events on the night of the Passover Supper appears to have been the taking by our Lord and His disciples of their places at the table..The contention of who should be the greatest, the foot washing, and the identification of Judas as the traitor.

PANTOMIME: Christ and the disciples act in pantomime as the scripture is read.

READER: Matthew 26:21 -- "And as they did eat, He said, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."
John 13:22 - 26 -- "Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom, one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake. He then lying on Jesus breast saith unto Him, Lord who is it? Jesus answered, "he it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon."

"And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, "That thou doest, do quickly." Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or that he should give something to the poor. He then, receiving the sop, went immediately out; and it was night."

(Judas leaves, and walks across platform)

Previous to the Passover Supper, Judas had bargained with the Chief Priests. Matthew 26:15 - 16, "And said unto them what will ye give me and I will deliver Him unto you. And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver, and from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him."

PANTOMIME: Christ and disciples act in pantomime as scripture is read.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave it to the disciples, and said, take eat; this is My Body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, drink you all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.
And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives."

Jesus was crucified for our sins, and all the 11 disciples (except John) died the death of a martyr.

(As each disciple is named he will stand and the spot will spot them with a shoulder spot. Then they will be seated again when the reader is finished with their story.)

READER: JOHN: He was exiled to the isle of Patmos, after escaping without injury out of a pot of boiling oil. He later returned and died at a great age.

PETER: Along with many other saints -- Nero sought to have him put to death. Jerome tells us that he was crucified, his head being down, and his feet upward, as he himself requested, because he said, "I am not worthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord. His wife also suffered martrydom.

ANDREW: He was crucified at Edessa on a cross shaped like the letter X, with the two ends put deep in the ground. This is called the St. Andrew's cross.

JAMES: (the elder) Was put to death by Herod Agrippa. Clemens Alexandrinus gives this account: As James was led to the place of martyrdom, his accuser was brought to repent of his conduct by the apostle's extraordinary courage and fell down at his feet to request pardon, professing himself a Christian and resolving that James should not receive the crown of martyrdom alone. Hence, they were both beheaded at the same time. Thus did the first martyr cheerfully and resolutely receive that cup which he had told the Savior he was ready to drink.

PHILIP: Suffered martyrdom at Heliopoles in Fergea. He was scourged, thrown in prison and afterwards crucified.

BARTHOLOMEW: He was cruelly beaten and crucified upside down.

THOMAS: He excited the rage of the pagan priest while he was preaching and was martyred, being thrust through with a spear.

MATTHEW: He was martyred in Ethiopia. Being slain with a Halbrad -- a long handled iron weapon.

JAMES (the Less): He was beaten, stoned, and his brains dashed out with a fuller's club -- a tool or hammer used for grooving and spreading iron.

THADDEUS: He was crucified at Edessa.

SIMON: Was crucified in Judea.

JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD: Laid down His life through crucifixion on Calvary. The perfect Lamb of God who knew no sin, yet took on Him the sins of all mankind, through all generations; that we might be redeemed.

SONG:

Taizé

Order of Service for First MCC of Atlanta

Taizé is a small village in the Burgundy district of eastern France. During the 1940's, an ecumenical religious community was founded there as a place of reconciliation.

Three times a day, the Taizé community joins in prayer and reflection with thousands of international visitors. A particular style of singing and praying has evolved to facilitate worship by people who do not speak a common language or share a common tradition.

The service is simple. With expanses of silence, there is time for personal contemplative prayer. The songs use just a few words that are repeated by all. Toward the end of the service, worshippers are invited to pray privately, either standing or kneeling near the altar.

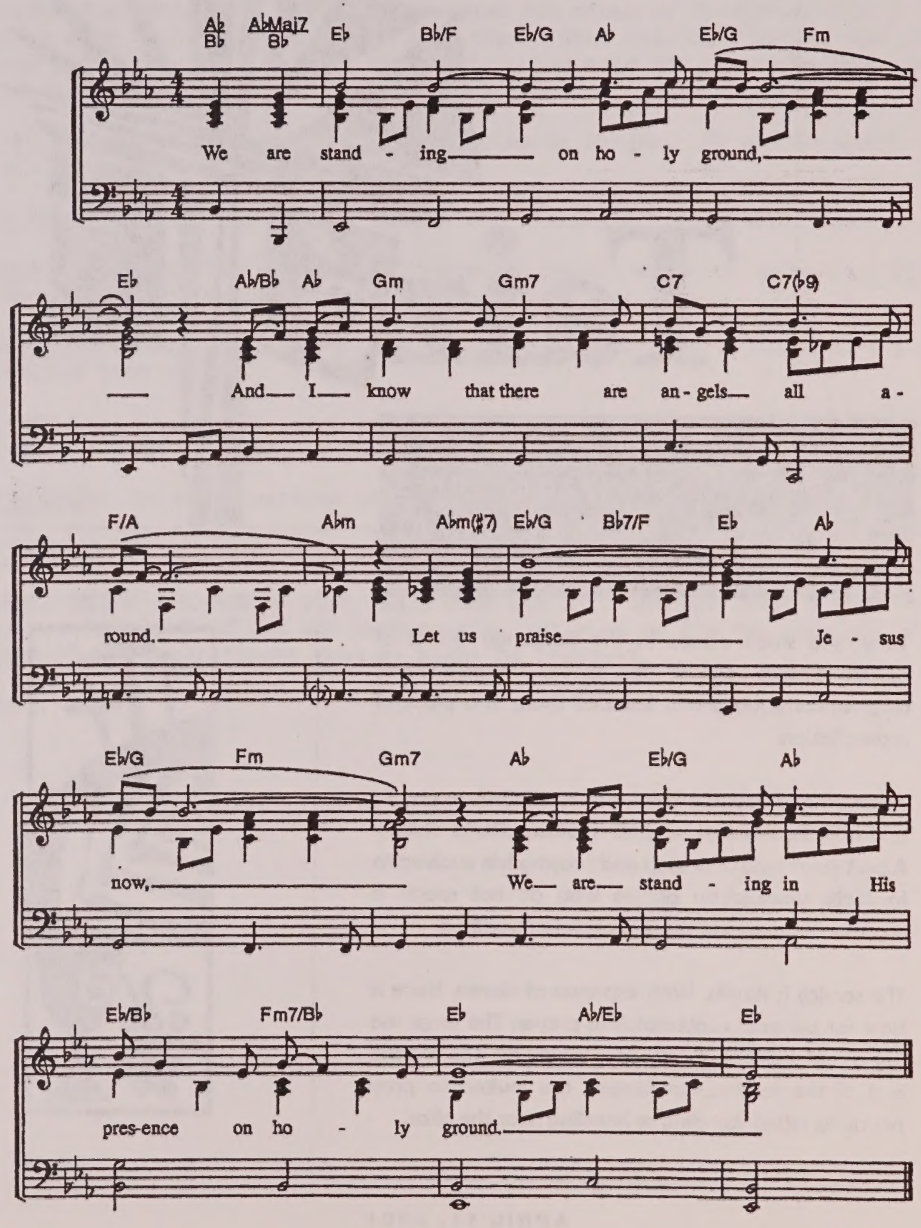
APRIL 11, 2001

7:30 P.M.

Holy Ground

(We Are Standing on Holy Ground)

Exodus 3:5

Geron Davis

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TAIZÉ
ORDER OF SERVICE

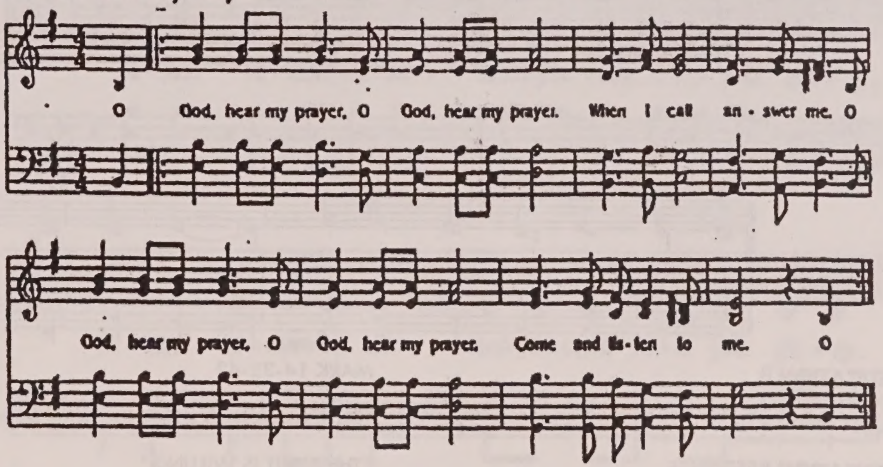
When you enter the Church of Reconciliation, the first thing that strikes you is the silence; the atmosphere of quiet peace. Candles flicker in the dim light, illuminating icons that welcome you and help you to enter into the mystery of God.
——The Story of Taizé

OPENING HYMN "HOLY GROUND"

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO WORSHIP IN STYLE OF TAIZÉ

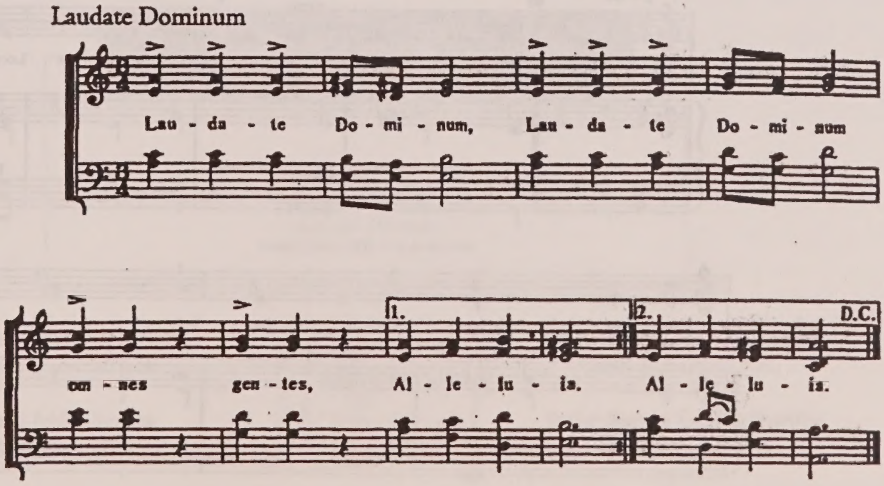
CALL TO PRAYER

CHANT

O God Hear My Prayer

OPENING PRAYER

CHANT

Laudate Dominum

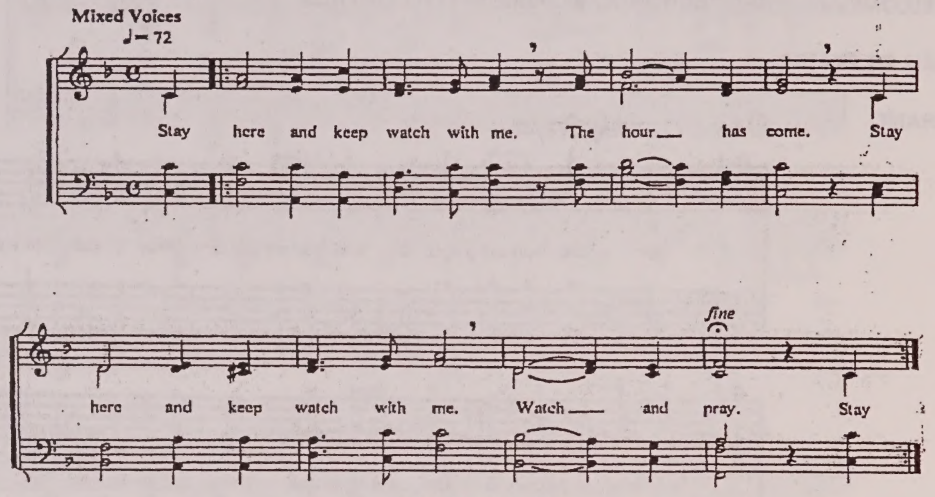


"A long time of silence after the Bible readings is at the heart of every common prayer at Taizé. 'A time of reflection on the words that have just been read,' explained a German boy, 'a time of personal prayer, or simply a time to rest with others in God's presence. Perhaps that is when we become most aware of that Other who is within us.'"
—The Story of Taizé

MEDITATION I MATTHEW 26:36-46

SILENT MEDITATION "Do you wake, or do you sleep?"

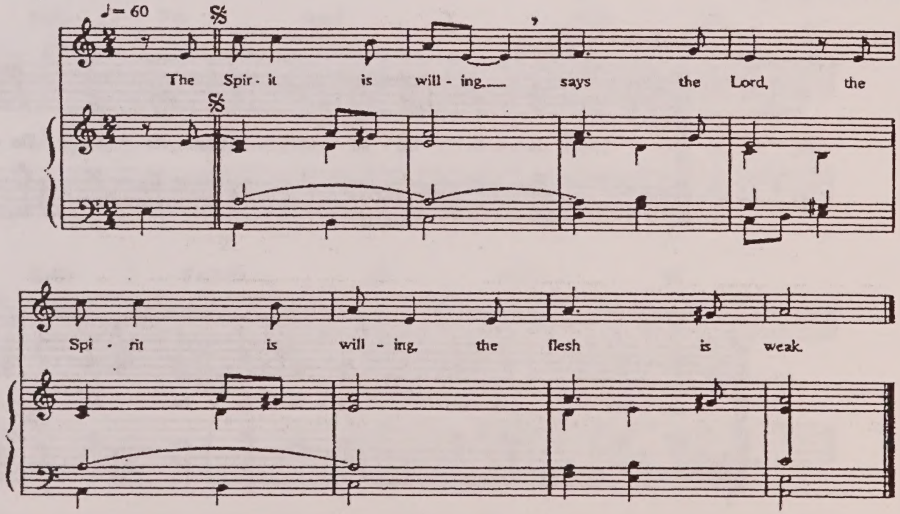
SONG **Ostinato Chorale**



MEDITATION II MARK 14-32-42

SILENT MEDITATION "Do you do God's will in your own, personal garden?"

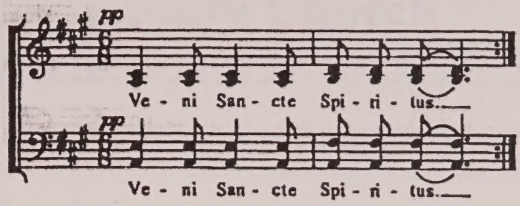
MEDITATION RESPONSE "THE SPIRIT IS WILLING"



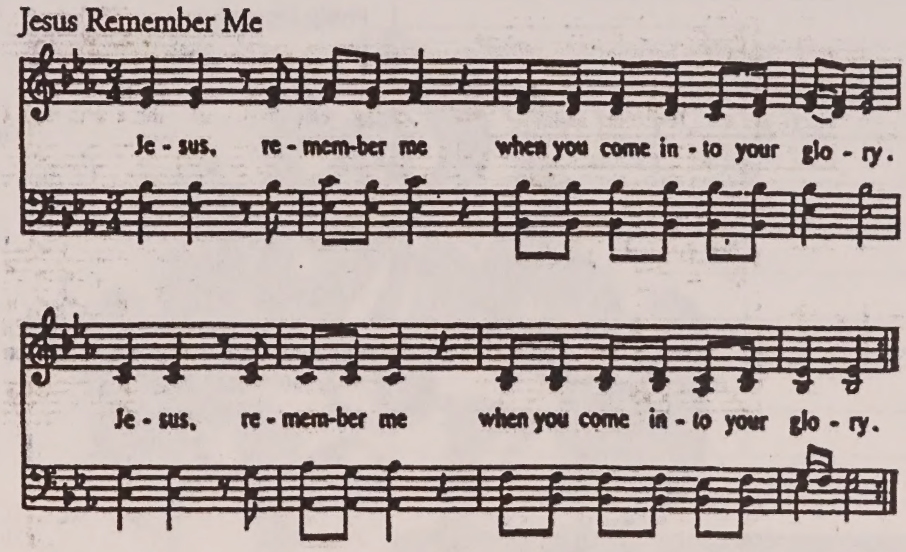
OFFERING

WE OFFER OUR PRAYERS

As we chant Veni Sancte Spiritus, we invite people to come forward and make a statement "I light this candle for _____", then light a candle and kneel in prayer as we continue to chant.



CLOSING HYMN "JESUS REMEMBER ME"



FIRST MCC OF ATLANTA

1379 Tullie Road
Phone: 404-325-4143
Fax: 404-325-8265
Email: firstmcc@mindspring.com

Maundy Thursday Service
April 12—7:30 p.m.

Good Friday Service
April 13—7:30 p.m.

Schedule of Worship for Holy Week

Easter Sunday Morning Worship
April 15—11:00 a.m.

Easter Sunday Evening Worship
April 15—6:30 p.m.

NOTES

CELEBRATING IN APRIL

Terri Cobb—6th
Joe Harper—7th
Karon McGrath—8th
Cynthia Young— 8th
Drea Guzman—9th
Shannon Williams— 10th
Caleb Newton—15th
Daniel Lewis—16th
John Moore—17th
Jim Christ—22nd
Joanne Pantano—22nd
James Ford—23rd
Tiffany Longdottir—23rd
Scott Tyler—23rd
Eddie Owens—24th
Ashley McCann—25th
Tina Brackins—27th
Cindy Blitchington-Davis—28th
Jean Campbell—29th
Vicki James—29th
Bob Johns—30th

New Prayer Request
April 08-11, 2001

Martha Tanner's Grandson	Healing
Carlos Calderon	Guidance
Stacy Blackburn & Tracy Frost	Healing/strength
Angie Hilton/Amy Edwards	Travel Mercies
"Randy & Jimmy"	Strength/Healing/Hope
Phillip Crowell	Guidance/Peace/Renewal
Glenda Turner	Healing
J. Gaona	Guidance/Strength
Scott Lembre/Joe Aparo	Guidance
Ruben Lopez	Strength/Guidance
Allan Reid	Praise/Peace
"Jane & Sandy" MCC-Greenville	Healing/Strength
Mike Dahl & Family	Healing/Hope
Rev. Doug Johnson Family	Peace/comfort
Atlanta PD	Strength/guidance/Protection
"John" (Eric's Brother)	Healing
Rev. John Rogers	Peace/strength
"New Believers"	Strength/Openness
Mike Watson	Healing/Peace/Hope/Strength
Jackie P.	Guidance
G. Turner	Family health/peace/love
Excell	God's blessings
Bobby Timms	Healing
Lynn Aube Carol	Healing
Nunyet and Family	Grieving

First Metropolitan Community Church
Of Atlanta

Date: April 12, 2001

Time: 7:30 P.M.

Maundy Thursday

Welcome and Explanation of Service

"Tell Me the Story of Jesus

The Living Lord's Supper—Part 1

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

Communion

"Eat This Bread"

The Living Lord's Supper—Part 2

Offering

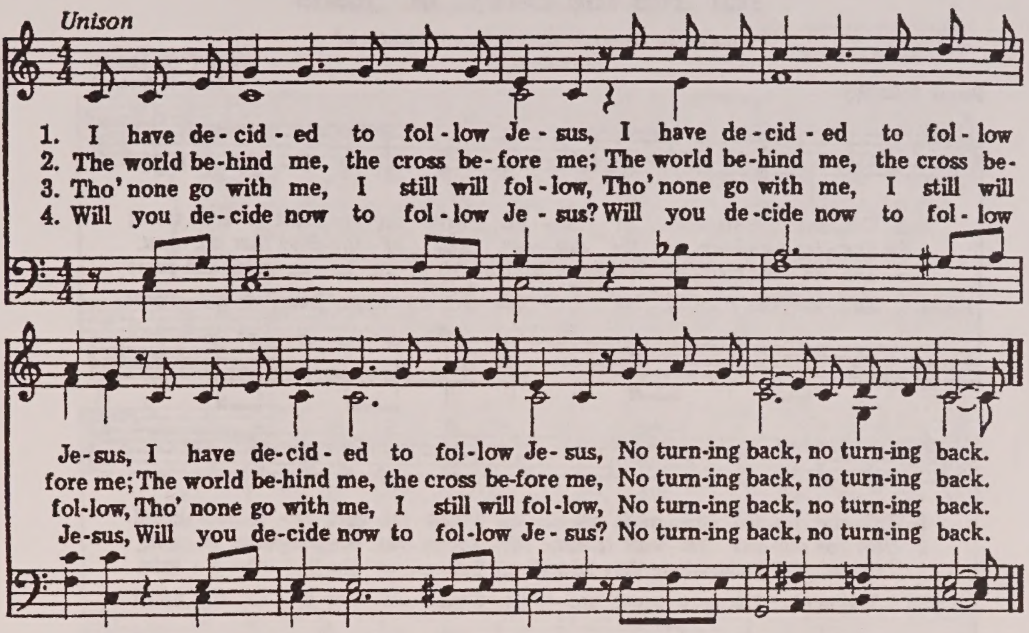
Benediction

"Lead Me To Calvary"

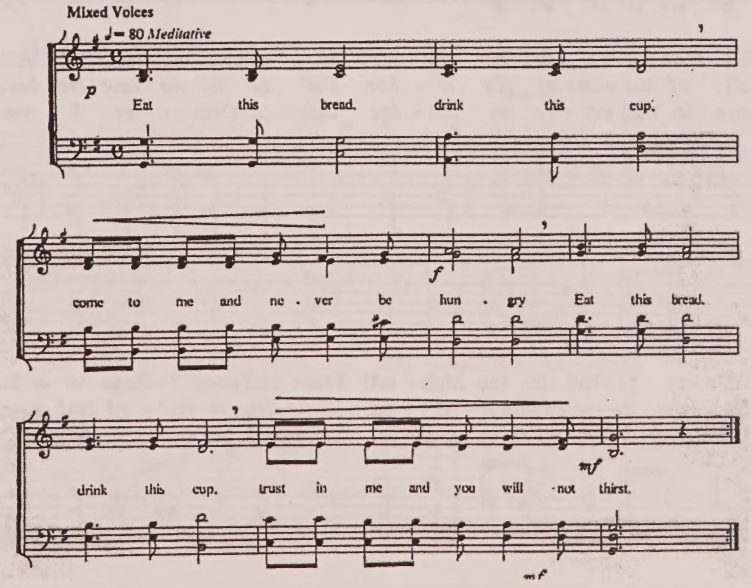
I have decided to follow Jesus

Irregular

ASSAM



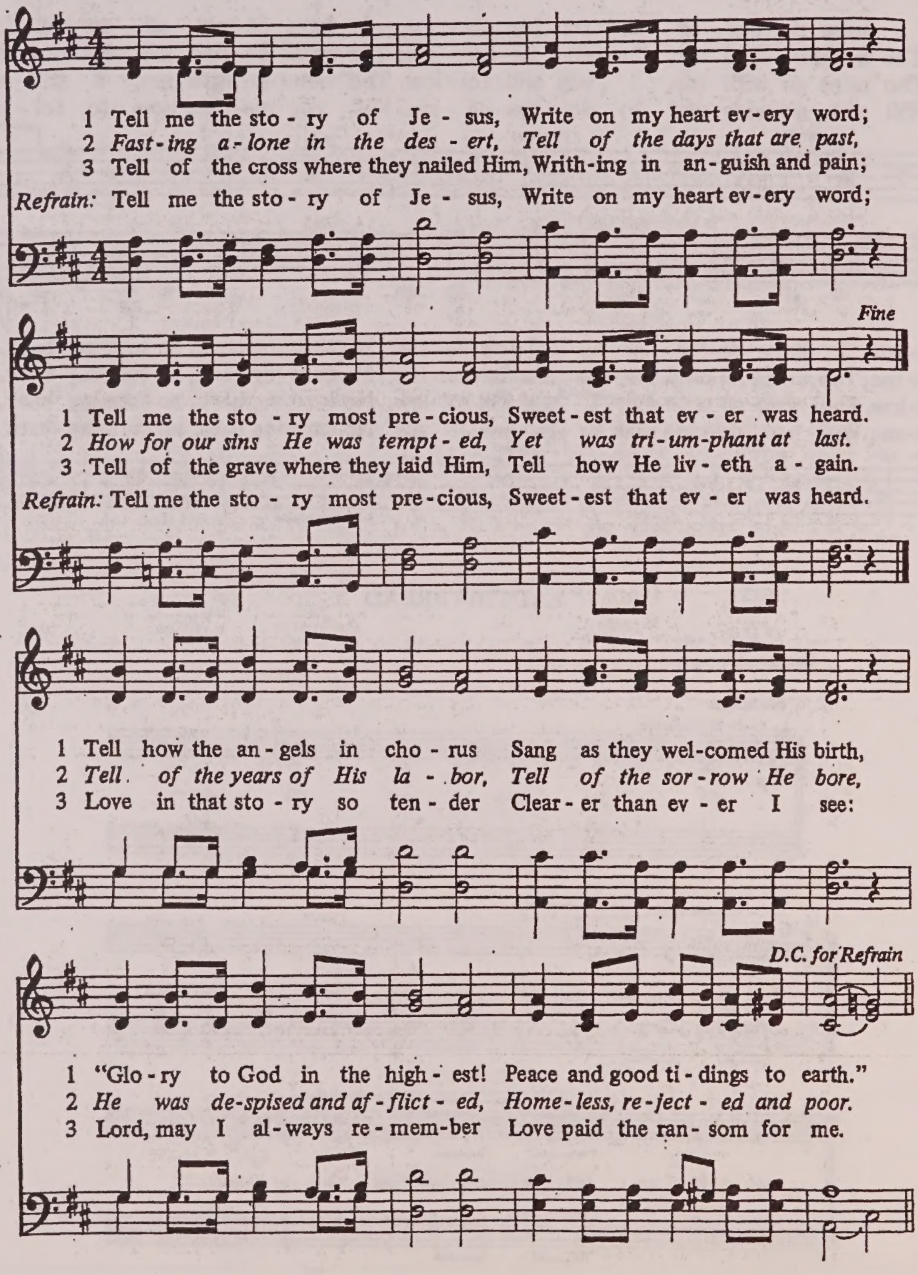
EAT THIS BREAD

Ostinato Response

Tell Me the Story of Jesus

Did not our hearts burn within us when He talked to us?
— Luke 24:32

Fanny J. Crosby

STORY OF JESUS
John R. Sweney

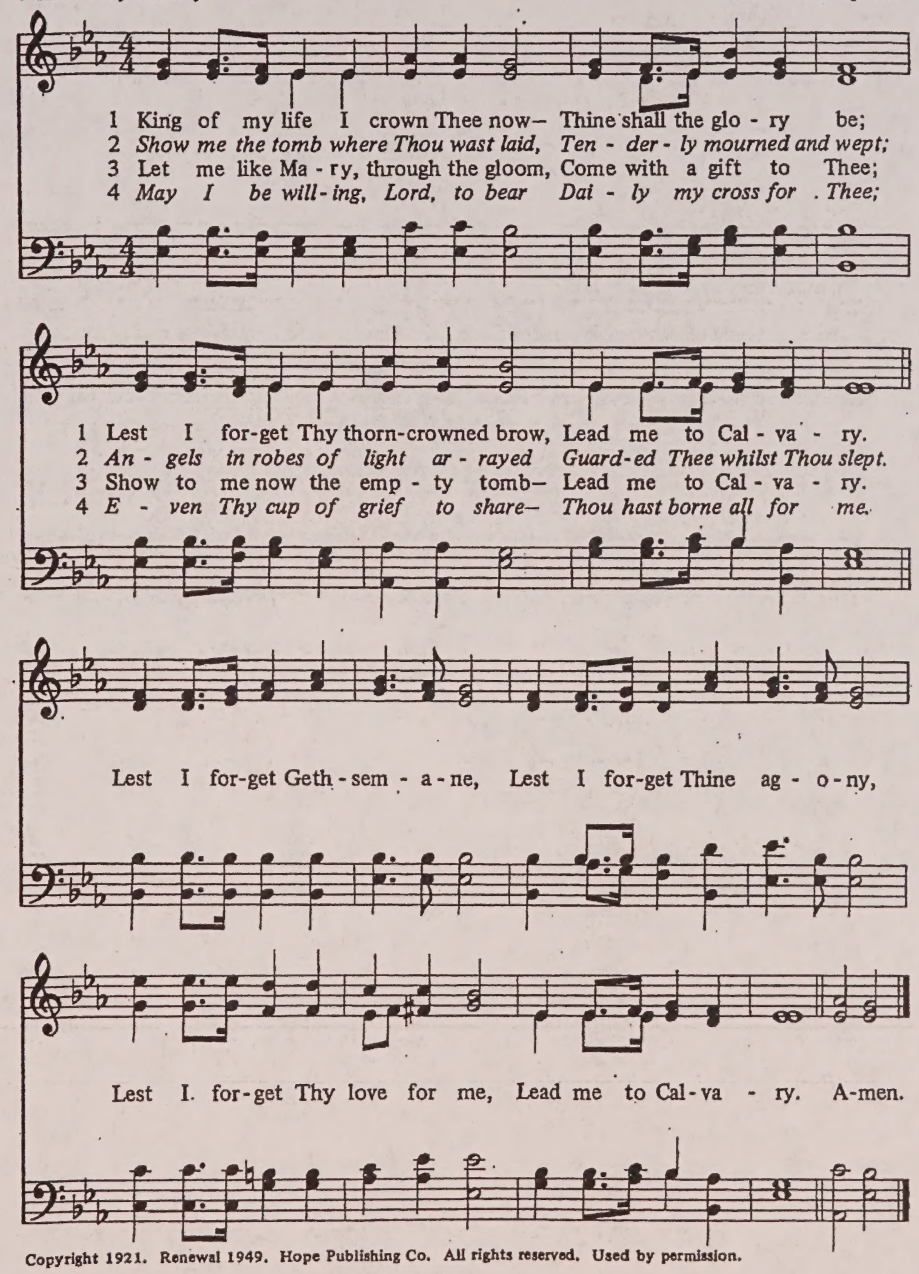


Lead Me to Calvary

And they came to a place which was called Gethsemane. . . .
— Mark 14:32

Jennie Evelyn Hussey

LEAD ME TO CALVARY
William J. Kirkpatrick



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New Prayer Request
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Excell	God's blessings
Bobby Timms	Healing
Lynn Aube Carol	Healing
Nunyet and Family	Grieving

That In All Things Christ Might Have The First Place

-- Colossians 1:18

First

Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

Sunday, May 6, 2001
Rev. T. Paul Graetz, Senior Pastor

We Gather to Worship

Prelude for Gathering: Scott Dunn, Organist

Ringing of Chimes Calling Us To Worship:

Call to Worship:
Leader: Your Word calls us to spread the Good News.
People: For we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
Leader: this day let our hearts be challenged to be true followers of your Word. Let us respond to your command to "Go into all the world" with this message. Let us surrender to your will for our lives ...
People: ...that in all things Christ might have the first place.

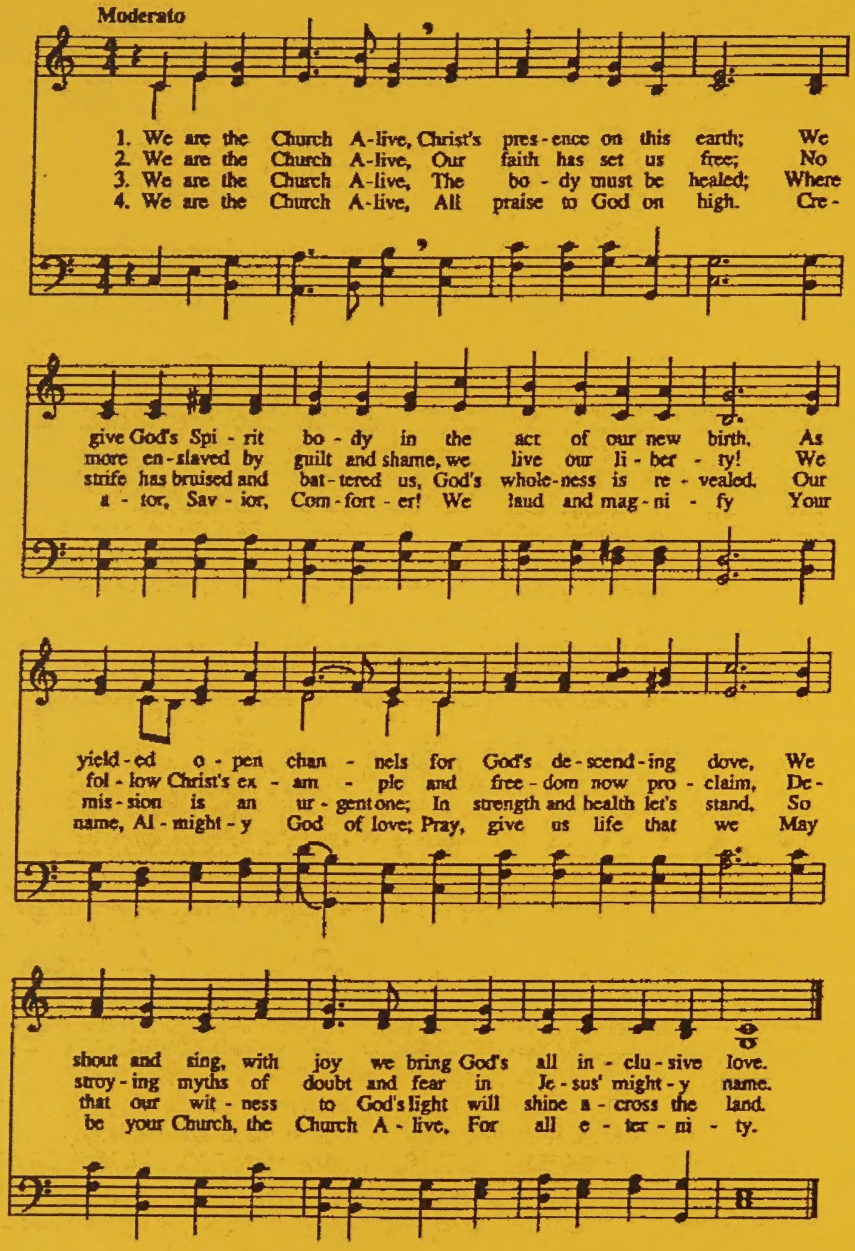
Processional Hymn: "We Are The Church Alive"

✝ Please rise in body and spirit as you are able.

We are the Church Alive

6.6.8.6.8.6.8.6. CHURCH ALIVE

Moderato



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Invocation Prayer

Exchange of Peace:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna' let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna' let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna' let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Welcome:

Congregational Worship in Song:

How Majestic Is Your Name

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth.
O Lord, our Lord how majestic is Your name in all the earth.
O Lord, we praise Your name. O Lord, we magnify Your name:
Prince of Peace, mighty God; O Lord God Almighty. (repeat once)

Glorify Thy Name

Jesus, we love You, we worship and adore You, Glorify Thy name in all the earth.
Glorify Thy name, Glorify Thy name, Glorify Thy name in all the earth.

How Great Thy Art

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee. How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee. How great Thou art, How great Thou art.

Prayers of and for the People:

The Lord's Prayer (sing together)

Our Creator, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever. Amen.

Rite of Membership: (sing together)

We are one in the bond of love, We are one in the bond of love; We have joined our spirit with the Spirit of God, we are one in the bond of love.

Please rise in body and spirit as you are able.

We Listen for God's Word

Scripture Reading:

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Please join in the responsive reading of the Word of God — John 1:10-14.

Leader: [10] "Christ was in the world, and though the world was made through Christ, the world did not recognize him.

People: [11] Christ came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

Leader: [12] Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in Christ name, he gave the right to become children of God— [13] children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

People: [14] The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his Glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Creator, full of grace and truth."

Leader: Here ends the responsive reading of the word of God.

People: Glory to you, O God, for this is the message of faith, hope and love.

The Response:

"Glory be to God, Creator of this world. And to our Savior, Christ, Whose death has saved us all Glory be to the Spirit, Whose presence makes us one. Glory be to God, the blessed Three in One. Amen."

Ministry in Music:

The Sermon: "The Beauty of Jesus In Us"
The Rev. T. Paul Graetz

We Respond to the Word

Offering of God's Tithes and Our Gifts:

Offertory:

Offertory Response:

We give Thee but Thine own,
What e'er the gift may be
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O God from Thee.

We Gather Around the Table

Sacrament of Holy Communion:
At First MCC, we serve an open communion. Everyone is welcome to participate. If you are not comfortable receiving communion, please feel free to meditate in your seat. We serve communion in the form of wafers and unfermented grape juice and we serve by intinction.

Time of Confession and Assurance:

The Great Thanksgiving:
Celebrant: God be with you.
People: And also with you.
Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them up to our God.
Celebrant: Let us give thanks to God our Creator.
People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.
Celebrant: It is right and good and a joyful thing ...

"The Sanctus"

Holy, Holy, Holy One, my heart, my heart adores You!
My heart knows how to say to You, Holy are You Lord.
(Spanish) Santo, Santo, Santo,
Mi Corazon te adora, Mi Corazon te sabe decir, Santo, eres Senor!

The Consecration:

Distribution of the Elements:

Communion Hymn:

When peace like a river attendeth my way. When sorrows like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul. It is well, with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

We Go to be People of God

Closing Announcements:

"Do Unto Others" Offering:

The Benediction: The Rev. T. Paul Graetz

Recessional: "Nothing Is Impossible"

The Postlude:
Join us for coffee and refreshments in the church Fellowship Hall.

Time of Prayer:
After the service, Our Lay-Ministers will be available at the Altar for prayers of healing, comfort and blessings.

Our Church Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. T. Paul Graetz
Minister of Ministry Mobilization: Rev. Dr. Edgar Miller
Minister of Music: Mr. Dave Lambert
Pastoral Care Minister: Rev. Chip Carson
Administrative Assistant: Mr. Rod Watkins
Sexton: Mr. Charlie Reid
Music Ministry: Melissa Kelly
Organist: Mr. Scott Dunn

Board of Directors: Rev. T. Paul Graetz, Ms. Teri Hatley, Mr. Biff Ryan, Mr. Joe Harper, Mr. Terry Baker, Ms. Martha Tanner, Mr. Lamont Alford, Mr. Tom Crouch, Mr. Nanu Nunez-Rivera.

Sign Language Interpreters: Mr. Al Whittington, Mr. Keith McWhorter, Mr. Alan Wallace

Council of Ministries: Mike Mitchell, Kathy Cannon, Phillip Crowell, Andy Bartley, Chris Harris, Ray Barreras, Austin Lewis, Teri Hatley, Paige Buff, Lauren Soldwisch, John Bagwell, Erin Wertenberg, Melissa Kelly.

Phone: 404-325-4143
Fax: 404-325-8265
Email: firstmcc@mindspring.com

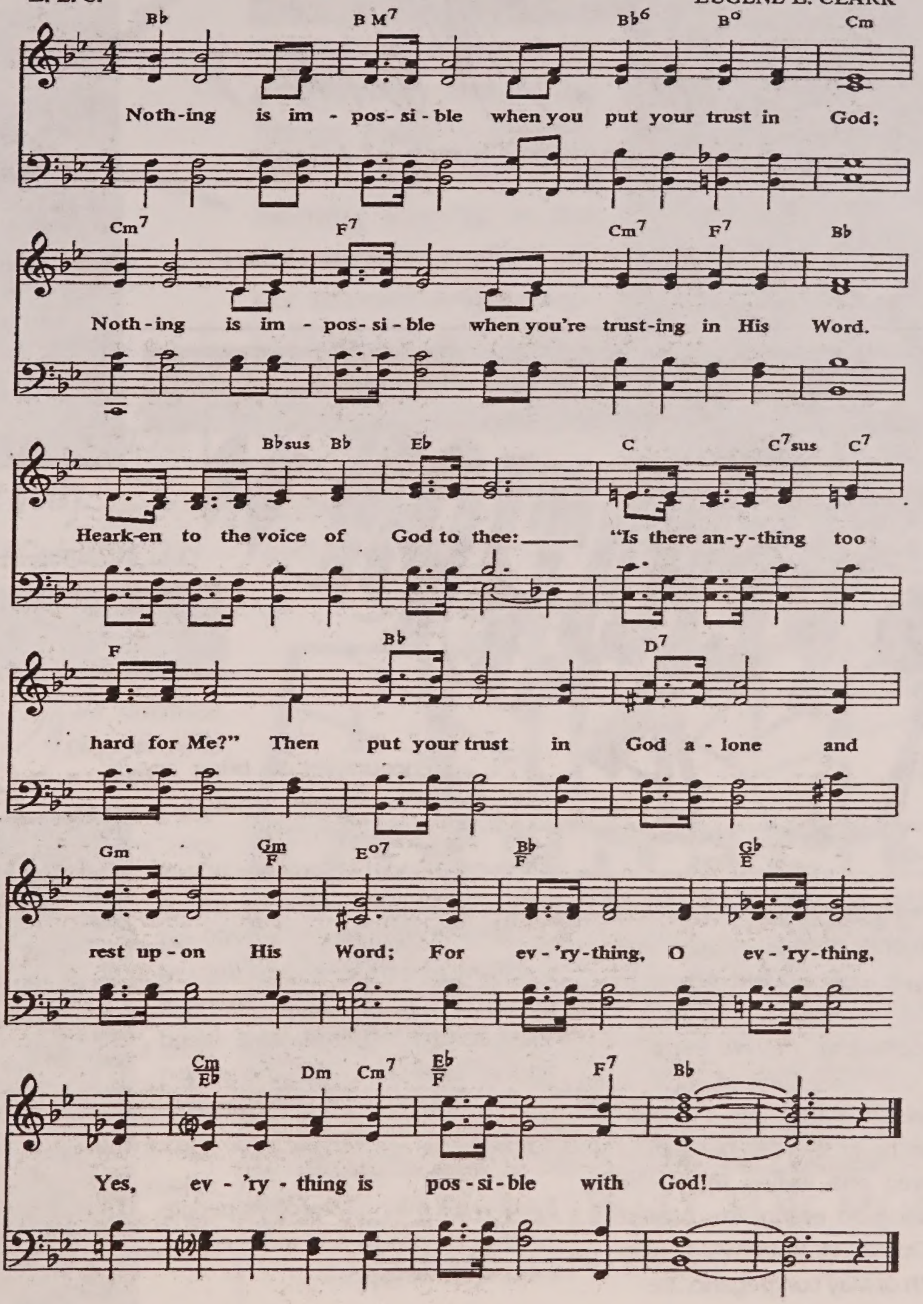
Our Web Site
www.firstmcc.com

"Sharing God's Love -- Serving Christ By Serving Others"

Nothing Is Impossible

E. L. C.

EUGENE L. CLARK



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That In All Things Christ Might Have The First Place

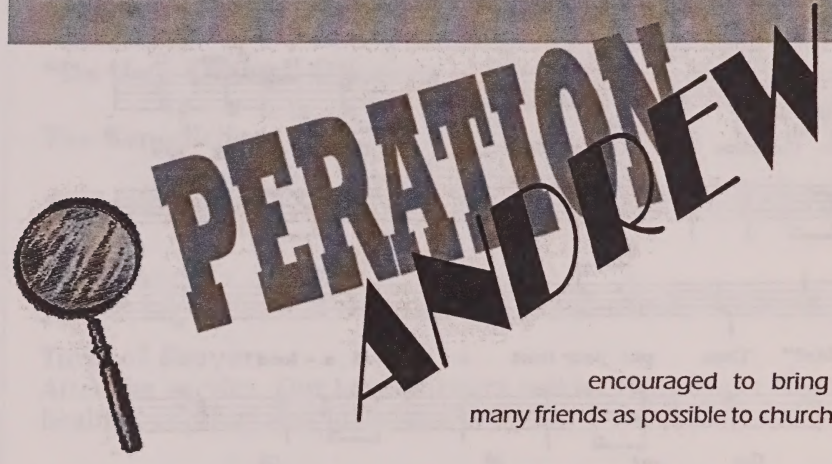
-- Colossians 1:18

First News

Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

"Sharing God's Love—Serving Christ By Serving Others"

MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE DRIVE



"Operation Andrew" is in effect for the month of May. Andrew was the disciple who brought people to Jesus and our emphasis for May is just that...*bringing others to Jesus.*

Our trends show that the vast majority come to First MCC because a friend/loved one invited them. We are holding an evangelism contest called "Operation Andrew". During the month of May congregants are encouraged to bring as many friends as possible to church.

For every friend that someone brings, they get to place an entry into a drawing. A top prize of a $200 gift certificate to a store like Best Buy will go to the winner of the drawing. If the person brings the same friend back a 2nd week, then the person and their friend get to place another entry into the drawing.

Every week during May offers people another chance to add more entries into the drawing pool.

Welcome!

If this is your first visit, we are delighted that you have chosen to worship with us. We hope that you will feel welcome. Following the worship service, please stop by the Hospitality Table in the Narthex. Some very friendly people will welcome you, provide you with information about our ministries, and answer any questions you might have about the church. We are glad you are here.

ARE YOU RECEIVING IT? Would you like to receive weekly "News and Notes from your Pastor at First MCC"? If so, please offer us your e-mail address and we will include you. Currently the Pastor is in touch with over 70 congregant each week through e-mail. Simply print your information CLEARLY in the friendship tablets or register your e-mail address at the friendship table. Weekly e-mails, news and notes are sent from your Pastor, keeping you up on the events and ministry information of First MCC.

For in the one spirit we were all baptized into one body.

1 Corinthians 12:13

WHAT'S ALL THE CLUCKING ABOUT?

Don't forget to join us for fried chicken and all the fixings today - Sunday, May 6 right after the morning worship in the Fellowship Hall. This dinner benefits Angelic Music Ministries, so come eat, laugh, fellowship and be entertained by the members of Angelic Music Ministries and some very special quests!

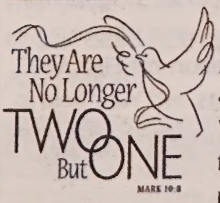
JOIN ANGELIC MUSIC MINISTRIES FOR AN OLD FASHIONED SUNDAY DINNER & FUND RAISER!

May 6, 2001- Following Sunday Morning Worship In the Fellowship Hall

SUNDAY COUNTRY DINNER AND ALL THE FIXINGS, ENTERTAINMENT, RAFFLES AND FUN

Donate what you would spend for a Sunday meal. 10% to be returned to First MCC General fund.

GAY/LESBIAN WEDDING EXPO



We discussed plans to hold a "bridal or Wedding fair" for the community, similar to the Health Fair we sponsored earlier this year. Based on the number of Holy Unions that are beginning to be done at the church, we think there is a lot of interest in this type of thing. We will invite local businesses to have a booth showcasing their services (catering, flowers, photography, etc.) to the community. The tentative date for this event will be Sunday, July 22 after worship.

MEXICAN RIVERIA CRUISE

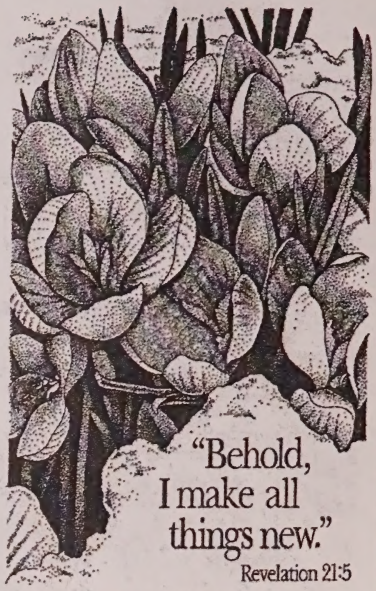
GREAT EXPECTATIONS
SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 7, 2001.

CABINS ARE AVAILABLE AT $555. DON'T MISS THIS GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR A GAY CRUISE!
A DEPOSIT IS DUE BY MAY 30, 2001.

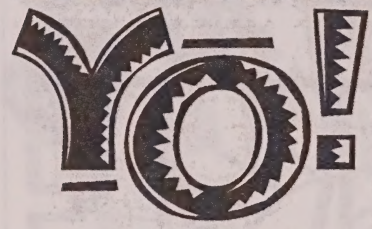
SEE JOHN BAGWELL FOR MORE DETAILS ON THIS EVENT!

EIGHT NEW MEMBERS JOIN FIRST MCC

Last Week's membership class brought 8 new members into our growing membership of the community of God at First MCC. This Sunday we welcome Margie Mills, Jeanne Pollara, Tom Isenhour, Kim Allen, Lee Terry, Amy Byrd, and Helen Brown. Some interesting facts about this membership class: 1 came from the Roman Catholic background, 2 from the United Methodist, 1 from a non-denominational background, 1 Episcopalian and 1 with no particular church or faith background. We truly are tapestry of diversity. The major reason for coming into membership was the need for something more in life, a need to grow spiritually. We are grateful that each new member has expressed their desire to work in various ministries of the church.



OUTREACH TEAM UPDATE!



Sharing the Good News. That's what the Outreach Team is all about. In I Corinthians 9:22 Paul says, "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." At First MCC we follow Paul's lead by trying as many ways as possible to reach out into our community to share Christ's love. During the month of May we, as a church, are undertaking "Operation Andrew" as an effort to get the entire church involved in spreading the word.

There are on-going efforts that you can participate in as well.

- We are planning another "Bar Night" on June 1. Plan on wearing your First MCC shirt and joining us for an evening of fun. Contact Dan Phillips or Bruce Ellis for more information.
- Pride is coming June 22-24. This year the Outreach Team will be managing one of the church booths. We will have our traditional Pride memorabilia for sale and also have an area where people can come and get information on First MCC and sign up for upcoming events, etc. Your help is needed in staffing both booths. Sign up sheets will be available in the Narthex.
- July 21 will be the Second Annual First MCC Whitewater Rafting Trip! More information will be given out over the next couple of weeks, but plan on joining us and bring a friend!

There will be an Outreach Team information table set up after church. Please stop by and get more information on this ministry. Your ideas are always welcome, so a suggestion box will also be there.

Thanks,
Teri Hatley—Outreach Ministry

PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

IF YOU HAVEN'T FILLED OUT A NEW PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE PICK ONE UP AT THE FRIENDSHIP TABLE IN THE NARTHEX.

"Ask the Doctor" on May 1 was a great success! We will be having more dinners and forums in the near future as we continue our outreach in the AIDS Ministry.

DISCUSSION FORUM TODAY

There will be a forum to discuss with our Lay Delegates the issues coming up at our District Conference in Montgomery, Alabama. The forum will be held today - May 06th at 12:30 p.m. in the Christensen Chapel. This is an important meeting to attend, as it is up to us to instruct our Lay Delegates on how we wish them to vote for us at District Conference. Please make a strong effort to be present.

CHALLENGE TO PRAY FOR 4 TO FIND GOD

Last Sunday I challenged everyone to name 4 people and pray for them that they would be moved by God's presence to begin a spiritual journey with God. I hope that you are continuing to pray for those who are dear to your heart. God's spirit calls us into relationship and as we become more award of that presence we desire a relationship with God. If 250 people begin to hold 4 people in prayer there will be 1,000 lives lifted to God in our prayers. This is the beginning of a great move of God. Don't forget to pray for others.

CHRIST COVENANT MCC

The congregations of First MCC and All Saints went in together to provide altar flowers for Christ's Covenant MCC this past week. Christ's Covenant MCC of Atlanta is going through a pastoral search and facing challenges in light of the recent news of the previous Pastor's credentials being removed.

They sent this thank you note to all:

Thank you to our friends and brothers and sisters in UFMCC for the beautiful flower arrangement that arrived today from First Metropolitan Community Church and All Saints MCC. The altar bouquet is a wonderful gesture of love and support during these challenging times We are grateful for them and the note expressing your prayerful support. Your love is deeply appreciated.

In Christ's Love,
Rev. Ken Ehrke, Interim Pastor and the Congregation of Christ's Covenant MCC of Atlanta

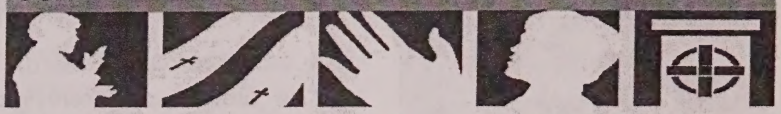
A DEFINING PHRASE

Catch the Excitement!
Witness the Joy!
Shape the Vision!

Sometimes a simple phrase or word establishes a purpose or direction. For example the simple phrase "I can" designates a positive course or direction. Here at First Metropolitan Community Church we are suggesting a definite direction for this church through the scripture Colossians 1:18; "That in all things Christ might have the FIRST place." By taking this simple yet powerful passage to heart we are setting a new course for this congregation. We are saying that in everything we do, Christ has first place, in our conversation, or mission, our actions or our deeds. In all things we are endeavoring to place Christ in the number one position of our thoughts. We hope that when our community and world speak of "First MCC", the "first" part reflects our commitment to placing Christ in the primary place. We know then that everything else will simply fall into order as God would intend.

We hope you will take this thought to heart and in all things remember that we at First MCC place Christ in the proper place as number one.

HOW TO FOLLOW JESUS WITHOUT EMBARRASSING GOD



SERMON · SERIES

In the movie *Oh, God,* John Denver plays a young man who keeps getting messages from God that he's suppose to relate to the rest of us. In on scene, he goes to hear an evangelistic preacher who in many ways is a caricature of all the worst things in those of us who take on that role. The John Denver character interrupts the preacher's sermon to tell him that God has a special message just for him. The preacher stops the service He announces to the audience *"this young man had come with a message from God".* John Denver look straight at the preacher and says, *" God wants you to shut up because you are embarrassing God!."*

Over the years all of us have said and done things that surely must have embarrassed God. Pastor Paul will be preaching on a sermon series addressing this issue, *how to follow Jesus without embarrassing God.* It's a life-changing look at our Christian journey and all the things we do for all the wrong reasons in the name of Christianity.

Don't miss a Sunday
in this series
beginning April 22.

THE SUCCESS OF SUNDAYS CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

The profile questionnaire handed out Sunday provided us with great information for church records. We were able to update our records as a result of the response and thirty one new names were added to our mailing list and congregational records. Thank you. You may assume that we have current information about you, but that may not be true. Some records were not updated or kept current during the Pastoral interim and transition times. Thank you for your willingness to update our records. It helps us serve you better as a congregation.

FIRST MCC WEBSITE

Subscribe to receive either the Pastor's Notes or FMCC E-Prayer mailings on our website. You may also post your Prayer Request directly!

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The FMCC Fundraising Committee is looking for volunteers to help in the many diverse areas of fundraising for our many different ministries. We are an active and pivotal committee helping generate funds for the many ministries of our church. We are looking for individuals to share their talent, time and commitment to help planning, setting up and caring out an idea, concept or task to help raise money in the general funds.

Some of our Fundraising Events included:

Capital Campaign
Building Funds
Miracle Sunday
Church Yard Sale
Pride
Sunday Dinners
and many others

All we need is some of your talents and God will help us with the rest.

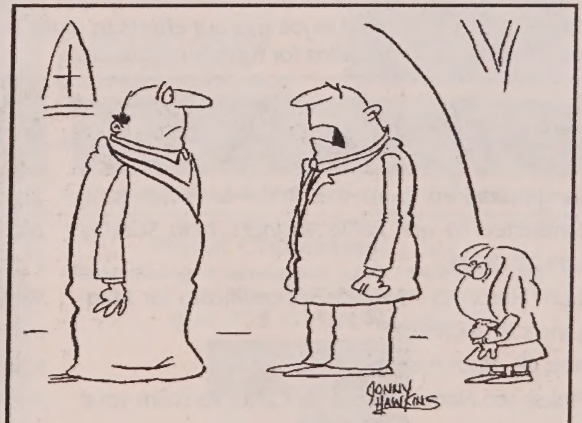
A special "Thank You" to all those people who helped with the Yard Sale held on Friday and Saturday!

MAKING MARK MEANINGFUL

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority.

Mark 1:22

Join us each Wednesday night starting April 18 for an exciting and informational Bible study on the book of Mark. Together we will follow the story of Jesus as the author Mark tells it in clearest form. Without a doubt, it is the most uncomplicated of the Gospels and the easiest to understand. This Bible study is for beginners and advanced alike. The book of Mark will be our text for a spiritual journey that wakes up the scripture and brings new meaning for this gospel text. When's the last time you read through an entire book of the Bible? Don't miss a Wednesday in the series!



"You're the theology expert around here... do we baptize Beanie Babies?"

PRIDE COMMITTEE "EDUCATE, PARTICIPATE AND CELEBRATE"

As you all know Pride 2001 is approaching fast and the Pride committee is in need of personnel to help:

1. staffing the Church's booths at the Pride Fairgrounds
2. merchandising – preparing and selling fun and unique items
3. construction, staffing and tear down of the Pride booth
4. fund solicitation – collection donations from Pride attendees

We can use your time, talents, ideas and contributions in making Pride a success not only for you but also for the many other people who take part in the celebration. Pride is a great way of letting Atlanta's Christian community know that we as a church are here for them.

The committee has proposed a "Living Float" this year and it will take many volunteers to pull it off. But with your hard work, dedication, commitment and the Lords blessings there is nothing that we cannot do. The Pride Committee will meet every:

Time: Saturday from 12:00 p.m. till 2:00 p.m.
Date: Starting May 5, and meeting periodically until the weekend of Pride
Place: Fellowship Hall

We will take this oppurtunity to plan, construct, merchandise and do all the necessary things that need happen to make this Pride Celebration an event that Atlanta and this church won't forget.

All personnel interested in joining our efforts to make happen please see Martha, Nanu or Carlos for further information.

HOSPITALITY

The Hospitality Ministry needs you to volunteer to host the fellowship/social hour after Sunday morning service. Just choose a Sunday that you are available and see Chris Harris to sign up and reserve that Sunday. It's a great way to meet our members and guests and a wonderful way to be of service to your church.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM THE PRIDE & FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Congratulations from the Pride & Fundraising Committee to our Raffle winner's held Sunday April 29, 2001.

Laure Holcomb - $50.00 Gift certificate for Maggiano's in Buckhead

Scott G. - Bath Basket

(Please see Nanu, Martha, or Carlos to claim your prize)

Thank you for all who participated!

STOP BY THE RESOURCE TABLE

Stop by the resource table in the Fellowship Hall and pick up some of the latest resources. New booklets on Homosexuality and Christianity, Covenant Keepers, Why Inclusive Language, and Spiritual Gifts are available at no charge. You will also find the Worship Bulletins from previous weeks as well as pamphlets on health and community issues. These informational tools are available for you to share with friends and family.

This Week at First MCC

Today — Sunday, May 6, 2001

- *9:30 a.m.—Joyful Sabbath Prayer Time*
- *11:00 a.m.— Morning Worship*
- *12:30 p.m.—Lay Delegate Discussion Forum (Christensen Chapel)*
- *1:00 p.m.—Angelic Music Ministry Dinner*

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

- *7:00 p.m.— Choir Practice (Choir Room)*
- *7:30 p.m.— Mid-week Worship Service*

Tithes and Offerings
April 22-25, 2001 — $3674.00

According to our ministry plan of service, our budgeted income expected on average per week is $4900.00. Due to the graciousness and faithfulness of our members and friends, last week we received $3674.00. We thank you for the use of your resources. Because of you, we can continue to build the souls of people by meeting their needs and healing human hurts through the many ministries of our church. Your abundant giving is making a difference in the lives of people.

Attendance: 178

F. Y. I.

You can advertise your business in our weekly news for just $25.00 a month. We encourage everyone to support the businesses that graciously support First MCC. For more information on advertising, contact Rod Watkins, Office Administrator at 404-325-4143 or firstmcc@mindspring.com

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*** Bring in this ad and receive 50% off X-Rays and Exam ***

NOTES

New Prayer Request
May 2-6, 2001

Stacy Blackburn & Tracy Frost	Healing/strength
Philip & Family of Mike Watson	Grieving
"Eddie"	Blessings/Praise/ Guidance
Tom Lynn	Healing/Peace
"Cindy B"	Healing
Edward Moon	Praise
"Croix"	Peace/confidence
"Patricia Jane/Brittney"	Guidance
Vanessa Lewis McCallen	Guidance/Hope
Collie Lens	Guidance/Peace, Happiness
Clay Neace's Niece	Healing
"Tish"	Travel mercies
"Elaine"	Praise
"anonymous"	Blessings to relationship
Austin Lewis	Praise
Ruben Lopez's cousin	Healing
Rev. Edgar Miller	Sale or Home/Comfort
Angel Blacker's Father	Healing/strength

CELEBRATING IN MAY!

Diane Smith - 5-3
Greg Tapp - 5-3
Felicia Thurmond - 5-4
Glenn Beck - 5-9
Tony Stiltner - 5-9
Lauren Soldwisch - 5-10
Robert Kesler - 5-11
Barry Hundley - 5-15
Mena Johnson - 5-17
Kelda McCray - 5-17
Tony Oglesby - 5-18
Ron Batson - 5-19
John Golden - 5-20
Jay Dancer - 5-22
Mike Watson - 5-22
Cecilia Harrelson - 5-24
George Nicoletas - 5-26
Otis Johnson - 5-27
Richard Lofstrand - 5-27
Jasmine Ross - 5-27
Jenny Pena - 5-29
Tom Ballew - 5-30
Allan Wallace - 5-30

the wonder working power of prayer

First
Metropolitan Community Church
Of Atlanta

1379 Tullie Road, Atlanta GA 30329
Phone: 404-325-4143 Fax: 404-325-8265
Email: firstmcc@mindspring.com

Rev. T. Paul Graetz, Senior Pastor; Rev Chip Carson, Congregational Care Pastor;
Rev. Edgar Miller, Ministry Mobilization; Melissa Kelly, Interim Music Director

Dear GLAD District Friends,

Please accept this collection of resources in the spirit of sharing. These are a few of the ideas, programs and worship tools that work for us.

Enclosed you will fine resource ideas on:

- Lay Chaplaincy program
- Example of a weekly Worship Bulletin and Church News
- Holy Union questionnaire
- Taize Service
- Maundy Thursday Service: The Living Lord's Supper
- A Good Friday Service Example
- Homosexuality and the Bible

For additional resources on Holy Unions, Homosexuality and the Bible, inclusive language please see our website www.firstmcc.com.

We look forward to this idea and resource exchange catching on throughout the district. May these be a blessing to you and your congregation.

Sincerely,

Paul Graetz, Senior Pastor

"…that in all things Christ might have the first place." – Colossians 1:18

First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

Introduction to the

"Lay Chaplains" Program

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Pager: _____

Cellular: _____

Email address: _____

Birthday: _____

What is the Lay Chaplains Program?

The Lay Chaplains Program is a ministry performed by persons appointed to be Lay Chaplains by the Pastor or Pastoral Staff of First MCC. Each Lay Chaplain will be responsible for keeping in touch with about twenty members or regular attenders. Contact will be made on a monthly basis, by phone and/or in person so that we may improve communication and stay connected with each other. Staying connected will allow us to make certain that we are meeting ministry needs and providing support for the members and friends of our congregation.

The Lay Chaplains Program will allow us to exchange information quickly between members, friends, staff, and board of the church. It is imperative that we respond to ministry needs as quickly as possible during the time of need rather than trying to express our apologies at a later date for not being there.

Thank you for accepting this challenge. May God bless you as we begin this powerful ministry together.

Lay Chaplain Job Description

A Lay Chaplain has the important task of keeping in touch with members of First MCC that might or might not have any other point of personal contact. Since the Lay Chaplain provides such an important link between members and staff, and is an official representative of First MCC, it is important that the Lay Chaplain fully understands the responsibility with which they have been entrusted. The duties include:

- **Contacting** every member of your group once each month. Contact may be face-to-face or by telephone.

- ***Staying*** informed of major events occurring at church. This will provide material for conversation as well as being a resource to the members of your group
- ***Encouraging*** the members involvement in volunteer opportunities or supporting the in their ministry area.
- ***Providing*** a written report once monthly to the Minister of Congregational Care/Coordinator of the Lay Chaplains Program. Reports will not be lengthy and forms will be provided.
- ***Reporting*** emergency situations immediately to the Minister of Congregational Care/Coordinator of the Lay Chaplains Program. This would include deaths, serious illnesses, and other crises.
- ***Attending*** basic training and regularly scheduled ongoing training sessions. This will allow you to share your experiences with others and learn from them too.
- ***Praying*** regularly for the members of your group as well at for the other Lay Chaplains, the Minister of Congregational/Coordinator of the Lay Chaplains Program, and other leaders of our church.
- ***Worshiping*** on a regular basis. This provides a source of support and encouragement for the Lay Chaplain. Also, it provide a vehicle for face-to-face contact with the members of your group.
- ***Training*** someone else to be a Lay Chaplain. This will be your ministry partner. As our membership grows, and we add other to our groups, we will be in constant need of new Lay Chaplains.

Lay Chaplain

Statement of Confidentiality

I understand that from time to time, while serving First MCC as a Lay Chaplain, I may obtain confidential information concerning someone in my Lay Chaplains group. This information may include, but not be limited to, family issues, coming out issues, finances, mental or physical health status, dating/spousal situations, or other sensitive personal problems. I further understand that this information is shared with me a matter of trust and, to the best of my ability, I will not betray that trust. I know that it would not be appropriate to discuss such information with anyone other than the Minister of Congregational Care/Coordinator of the Lay Chaplains Program, and then only for the purposes of training or responding to the needs of the member in question. I have read and understand this manual and the vision of the program.

_____ _____

Lay Chaplain's Signature Date

(Please turn in a booklet with this page signed for your file and keep one for yourself.)

The Jethro Principle

Exodus 18:17-21

Now Jethro, the father-in-lay of Moses replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen to me now and I will give you some advise: Teach the people the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties are to perform.

Select capable women and men from all the people --- those who love God, trustworthy women and men who hate dishonest gain --- and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.

Contact

Every Lay Chaplain is responsible for contacting the person on the membership list assigned to them. As a rule, each person should be contacted one per month. However, there may be times that you would want to contact a person in your group more often. In the event of serious illness or death of a partner, member of their nuclear or extended family, or in the event of their own illness, etc. more frequent contact may be appropriate for a short time.

Contact may be in person (face-to-face) such as at worship services or other group meetings. Face-to-face meetings at places other than the church are generally not going to be interpreted by the member as an intention contact from the church instead of a "chance meeting." Email is too impersonal and a written note by snail-mail is preferable. Contact may be by telephone. Initial telephone contacts should be made to home telephones only and at a reasonable hour. After you have established a relationship, you will know what time and where calls are appropriate. Contacts should be very discreet until you become familiar with the individuals living and telephone situation. Most of us are proud to be a part of First MCC and either a member of friend of the Gay/Lesbian/Bi/Trans community. However, that is not the case for everyone. Some of our members may live with relatives or friends and are not yet ready to announce their affiliation with our church. If you have to leave a message, you might just want to identify yourself and calling from "church" with no specifics.

If this sounds a little too much like a "cold call" for your comfort level, you may want to send your group members a letter or note of introductions first.

Listening

Listening is an essential tool for ministering to people who are hurting, ill, or in need of comfort. We can hear without listening. Genuine listening is actually hard work. If we are going to really understand the situation that someone is in, or how they are feeling, we must not be preoccupied, our focus must be on them and their emotional and spiritual needs, rather that on ourselves and on our own needs. We must clear our minds and pay close attention to their tone, gestures, and expression. Communication is both verbal and nonverbal. When we sit closely and can see one another we are able to communicate better. Telephone contact does not give us the advantage of seeing the expression on a person's face or other body language. As a result, when it is a telephone contact, we must be even more diligent to make sure to hear not only what is being said, but also what is being hinted at or held back. Genuinely listening to others lets them know that what they say is important and that they are important to you and to the church. Remember to listen to "feelings" that often convey a more important message than the words themselves convey. Are they angry, happy, sad, confused etc? Remember, also that anger is part of the grieving process and often anger in misdirected. What they might "say" they are angry about is far less important than the fact that they are angry. That could apply equally to other emotions as well.

Lay Chaplains are in the business of providing "care" to the members of their church group which is not the same as "counseling." It is important to know the difference.

Care is ...

Listening, offering support, and sometimes suggesting options

Counseling is ...

A professional function of people qualified to offer counseling services.

Your Support System

Serving others through ministry can be and exciting experience. When we notice change or growth in someone else because of our efforts, it, very often, causes us to want to devote more time to helping others meet their needs. Providing support for others is so important that we sometimes get out of balance. All of our energy is focused on caring for others and we neglect caring for ourselves. When we forget to care for ourselves, our "cup" runs empty and the result can place us in a situation where we are no longer as effective as we can be. Sometimes the result is "burnout," or "burn-up." If it occurs, you won't be any good to anyone, including yourself, however, it can be avoided.

There will be days that you just don't feel like giving of yourself. You may have planned to make some phone call on a certain night, but that evening comes, and you just don't want to "mess" with anyone. As long as you don't feel that way every day, it is kind of normal. When that "I just can't today" feeling comes on, do yourself and those in your Lay Chaplains group a favor and don't call them. Take some time to focus on yourself and do something nice for yourself or go do something fun. Take a friend --- yourself --- to a movie or something. If nothing urgent is happening, routine call can wait until tomorrow.

Your ministry partner is a good source when you find your own cup beginning to run empty. Your partner knows exactly how you feel because, most likely, she or he has experienced the same feeling. Share with them and allow them to minister to you. All work and no play is not good. Take advantage of the opportunities available before and after worship services by arriving early and staying for the social time to give and receive hugs. This is a good time to catch up on news with your friends and an excellent opportunity to make new friends.

Remember, you are not in this ministry alone. If you ever wonder if you are trying this all on your own and there is nobody around that cares, please remember that it is your responsibility to speak up. Nobody can read your mind or know how you are feeling. As a Lay Chaplain you are an adult Christian. You must, as an adult, take the first step to make your own needs known. As you recall, those steps are:

Call your ministry partner.

Call the Minister of Congregational Care/Coordinator of the Lay Chaplains Program.

Verbalize your needs with them.

Attend worship.

Get and give hugs.

Be a friend of yourself.

Hello.

(Now what do I say?)

First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

Lay Chaplain's Monthly Contact Report

Lay Caplain_____ **For**_____ **20**____

Parishioner _____ Date: _____ Type of Contact: Phone___ Face-2-face___ VM___ Note___ E-mail_ _	Contact Notes:_____
Parishioner _____ Date: _____ Type of Contact: Phone___ Face-2-face___ VM___ Note___ E-mail_ _	Contact Notes:_____
Parishioner _____ Date: _____ Type of Contact: Phone___ Face-2-face___ VM___ Note___ E-mail_ _	Contact Notes: _____
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Parishioner _____ Date: _____ Type of Contact: Phone___ Face-2-face___ VM___ Note___ E-mail_ _	Contact Notes:_____
Parishioner _____ Date: _____ Type of Contact: Phone___ Face-2-face___ VM___ Note___ E-mail_ _	Contact Notes:_____
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